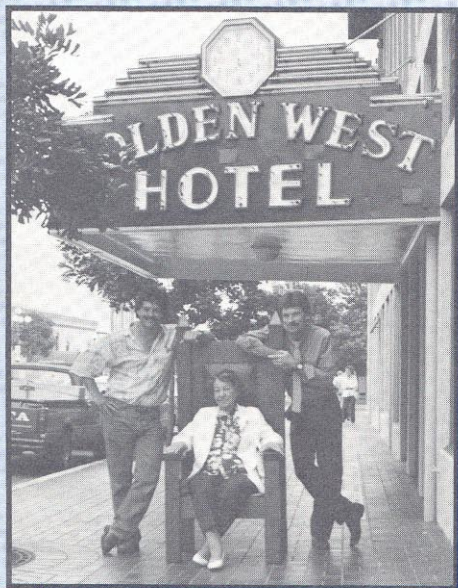


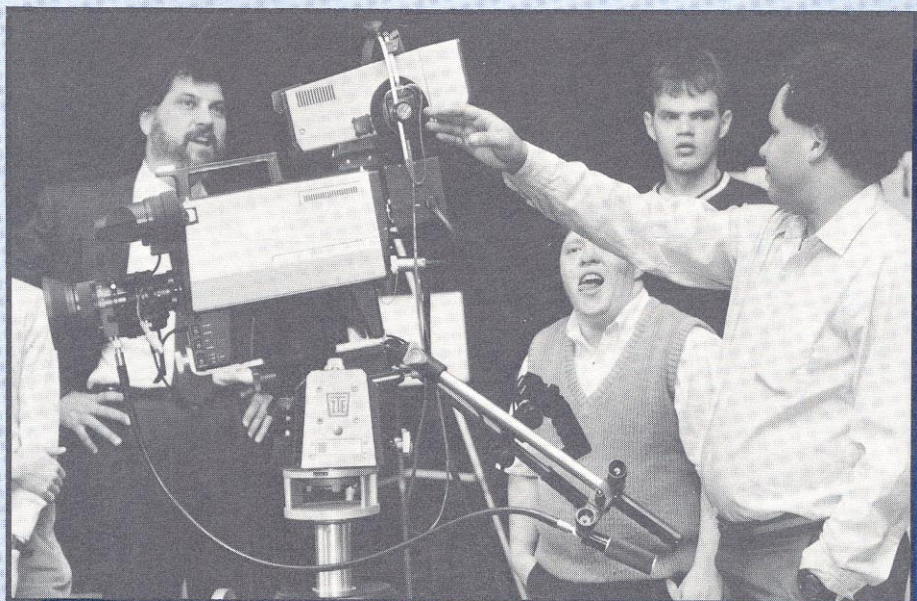


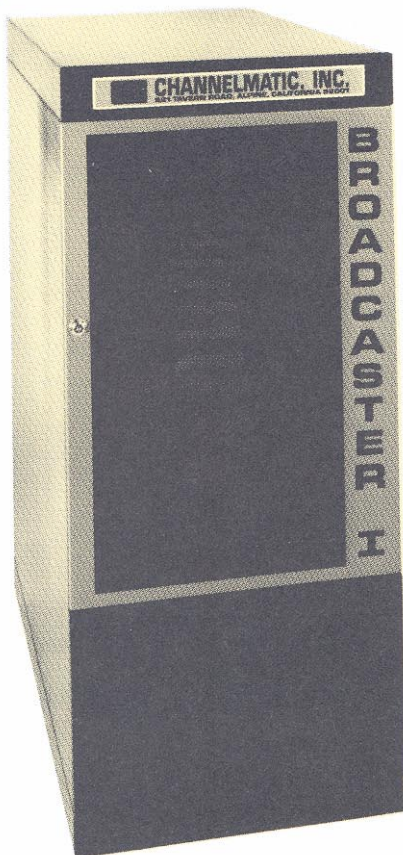
Community Television Review

Volume 10, No. 2
Summer 1987

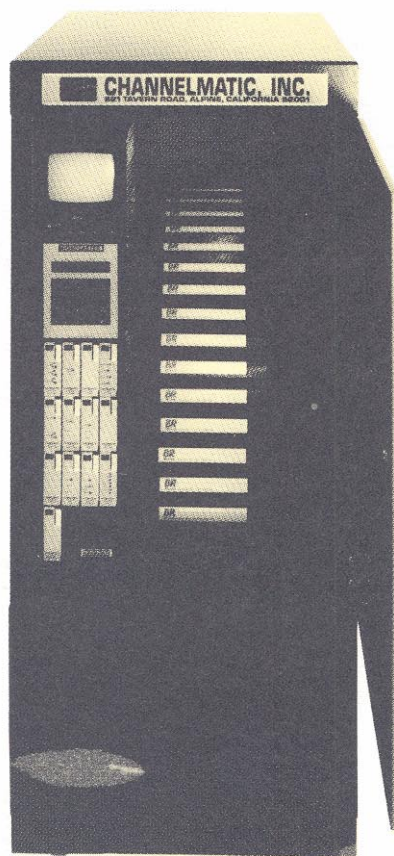


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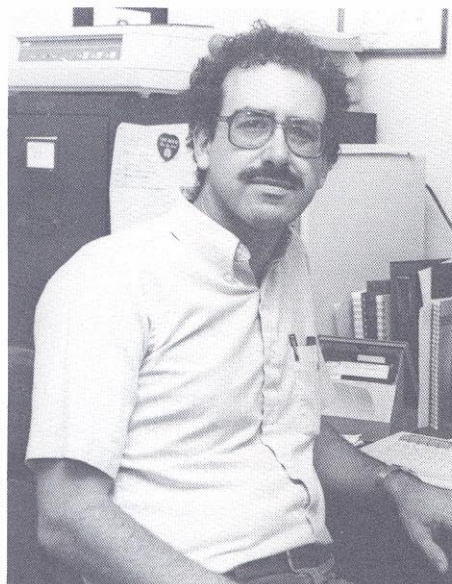
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Letter from the Managing Editor

By Dave Bloch



"Diversity of Voices" is the theme of this issue of *Community Television Review*; "Voices of Diversity" is the theme of the 1987 NFLCP National Convention at which this issue makes its appearance.

No, it's not a typesetting error. Rather, the two themes offer an opportunity to think about two different and important facets of the concept of *diversity*. Both of them will be in evidence, both at the Convention and in this issue; and both are of profound importance in community programming.

The Convention theme, "Voices of Diversity," suggests the idea of *voices saying different things*. Presentation of divergent views has always been access' most important reason for being—it is the embodiment of those First Amendment freedoms we are always talking about. As Michael Meyerson says in this issue, "It's an electronic Tom Paine; it's an electronic pamphleteer."

The *CTR* theme, "Diversity of Voices," puts the emphasis on the speakers: *different voices saying things*. The articles in this issue offer the experiences of community programmers in public access by and for all these groups and more: labor, gays, Asians, Viet Nam veterans, the developmentally disabled, seniors, religious communities, the deaf, and recent immigrants. This issue also includes the transcript of a meeting set up by NFLCP and the American Jewish Committee to discuss the "other side" of the First Amendment—programming by hate groups.

Important stuff to talk about, and a proud record for community programmers to look back on, at this time of the Tenth Annual NFLCP Annual Convention.

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IN MEMORIAM

This issue is dedicated to CTR editorial Board Member William Rushton. We have lost someone of great creativity and vision in our field.

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Diversity on Parade In Chicago

By Lilly Ollinger Gleich

The notion of access TV was founded on the positive virtues of diversity. Compared to most broadcast TV which often reduces ideas into bland but acceptable pabulum, access can give us spice!

The access menu reads like an international smorgasbord. All varieties of race, creed, religious persuasion, age, economic strata and taste find a place at the access table. In Chicago, for example, we have Hispanic shows, Polish shows, and Black shows on Cable Access 19. There's a series on Islam, a variety of church services, and a piece of Buddhism. Shows dramatizing the problems of homeless Chicagoans run along with a local soap opera about the very rich. What a feast!

So what is the value of such diversity? I'd like to share an example of diversity in access that I found particularly telling. Last year, there was a welcome home parade for Vietnam veterans here in Chicago. The parade drew over 100,000 and was one of the media events of the season. It also drew two separate volunteer access crews out onto the streets armed with Chicago Access Corporation video gear.

Two videotapes came out of their efforts, as different as night and day. They not only represent Vietnam veterans, they represent the diverse points of view that members of this group hold about the Vietnam experience.

"Welcome Home" was produced by Lee Avante, with help from a veteran and access producer, Tom Vasquez. It portrays the welcome home parade as an unfinished and sentimental journey, one that started in Vietnam but is only ending now, twenty years later. The parade is seen as a healing, a time to share, a time to regain unity and pride. At one point, the narrator describes the war as beginning "under a shroud of secrecy, and ending as a failed media event." This aptly describes what many veterans must feel about the coverage of the most powerful experience of their lives. Somehow, the tape brings home one simple message again and again:

We were there. We were only nineteen. We were together. Our experience is important.

The other program, "I Would Never Do That Again," is by Denis Mueller. Mueller, with the help of Bob Hercules and the Media Process Group, made a tape with the Vietnam Veterans Against the War to convince high school-age kids to stay away from the armed service recruiting offices. In this tape, the veterans interviewed have a different message. It is marked with anger and broken promises. The vets in this tape feel used, they feel brutalized. One veteran says, "Everybody down here was trained to [kill people], but now they want my kid. I'd fight again, but I'd kill my son before I'd let him go."

The producers of these tapes have different backgrounds and different reasons for making access shows for the Chicago Access Network. Lee Avante used to work for the Chicago ABC-TV affiliate as a cameraman and editor. He sees himself as a photojournalist whose reason for being is to capture the real and inspiring quality of such an event. Denis Mueller comes from an entirely different school of media. The idea for his program came from a conversation with Caryn Rogoff, long time alter-

native video producer from New York's Paper Tiger TV.

The two producers had different contacts within the veterans' community. Avante had more mainstream contacts; Mueller worked with Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

Their differences also are reflected in their views of the broadcast media. Avante applauds the fact that three of the local TV channels in Chicago covered the parade live. He says he got considerable cooperation for the broadcasters, including some of his old friends at ABC.

Mueller tells a different tale. He watched the broadcast crews cover the parade. At first, says Mueller, there were crews from all the network and independent stations in Chicago vying for good shots, but after a couple of miles they dropped away. All he saw were vets, except for one remaining crew from a local channel. "Maybe they (the remaining crew) are going to really cover this event," he thought. But when he got in closer, he saw that they were cueing vet after vet to

Continued on Page 38



Tom Vasquez, producer of *Veterans' Forum* on the Chicago access network, interviews CBS's Bill Kurtis on the media's handling of Vietnam veterans.

Strategies for Outreach to Minorities and Special Human Interest Users

By Jewell Ryan-White

Minorities, special human interest groups and individuals organize around every conceivable issue and lead struggles that have a lasting impact on the nature of their communities. Who are these special human interest groups or individuals? Where do we find them?

In outreaching to minorities and special human interest groups, two significant barriers, sexism and racism, must be addressed. Sexism is rooted in our culture and creates conflicts for groups that may step out of the socially-accepted mode of behavior. Racism slams doors in people's faces, limits participation, stereotypes their lives and takes their history from them.

It is most important that we respond to the needs of minorities and special human interest users. Forming a working relationship, where these users become an integral part of an organization that can impact it's success, means we have to be very diverse and very flexible.

These strategies are done through direct people-to-people contact. Generating involvement on a day-to-day basis takes very patient, long-term effort. There is one thing we must understand-- organizing is not a "quick fix" solution; it takes a long time.

The best approach for effective outreach to minorities and special human interest users is based on their recognition of your organization's integrity. The need for information about and the opportunity to connect with other special human interest groups and people of color, to break isolation and provide inspiration must be focused upon.

STRATEGIES

Identify who the minorities and the special human interest groups are. Identify their organizations and leaders using foundation centers, coalitions, libraries, minority organizations, women's groups, educational institutions, the media, and other local resources.

Provide information by conducting a continuing program designed to cover all aspects of the opportunities offered by your organization.

Provide training through the access center.

Ensure that your **Board of Directors** reflects all segments of the membership and community served by the organization.

Give attention to minorities and special human interest groups when locating **consultants and speakers**.

Set up **programming exchanges** with other organizations.

Ensure that **recruitment** of minorities and special human interest groups takes place at all levels of your organization.

Include articles in your organization's **newsletter** on ethnic and special human interest-oriented issues.

EDUCATION

Special human interest and minority advocacy in the cable industry requires attention to several areas:

Program Directors must be sensitive to and begin to address the issue of **ethnic programming**. Programming should reflect not only the homes passed by the cable system, but the entire community population. This approach attacks the problem that minority communities are often the last ones wired (if they are cabled at all), and that by the time minorities are aware of access, the policies and programming have already been established.

The organization must develop a program of **affirmative action** in training and hiring of minorities and special human interest groups.

Audience measurement must reflect the different populations in the community.

Qualitative research into the interests and needs of these groups should be developed.

Include minority and special human interest representatives when conferences or other **special events** are planned.

NETWORKING

The importance of networking to stimulate leadership is essential. We can no longer sit in our offices and expect minorities and special human interest groups to come to us; we must be willing to reach out and make ourselves accessible. Regional meetings that include workshops on organizing and outreach could well be one method to explore.

Community programmers must face the realization that cable television operators are critically important to access. They must begin to pay attention to role of the cable television system—after all, the cable system is the distributor of the programming. A sound working relationship with the cable operator could best serve access interests presently and in the future.

To understand what the resource is, is to understand the situation. Leadership in this context means speaking out; it requires commitment and broad vision. Leadership development supports the creation of conditions which allow things to happen for all people. Shared leadership is also part of this concept. This kind of relationship will give access advocates the kind of resources, skills and foundation that are needed to address all those issues at the same time. □

Jewell Ryan-White is Public Relations/Promotions Coordinator for American Cablesystems Midwest, and chairs the NFLCP Special Human Interest Committee.

Public Access Cable Television: What Limits to Controversy?

By Dave Bloch

On May 4, 1987, the American Jewish Committee and the NFLCP cosponsored a roundtable discussion on public policy and community relations concerns entitled, "Public Access Cable Television: What Limits to Controversy?"

The forum focused on whether there should be ground rules for cablecasting of controversial programming, especially programming produced by "hate groups" of a racist or genocidal nature.

What follows is a transcript of the first major portion of the all-afternoon session. The remarks are presented substantially in their entirety, with editing only for readability and to reduce redundancy. Deletions are noted by ellipsis (. . .); additions and replacements by the editor are shown in brackets ([]). (Thanks to Staten Island Community Television and the American Jewish Committee for providing the tapes of the session to Community Television Review.)

PRESENTATION OF THE PROBLEM

Michael Meyerson, University of Baltimore Law School:

For those who teach and live in the First Amendment, and for those who cherish freedom of expression, public access creates both the possibility of a dream and the spectre of a nightmare. The dream is of true democratic communication, and the nightmare, which we've begun to see, is of hate groups using this medium to communicate.

I want to talk about the dream first, because you have to understand the power. Public access to cable television represents the first time in history that individuals and small groups have the ability to communicate through the electronic medium. Never before have people actually been able to, individually, say "I want to communicate—I have something to say." It's an electronic Tom Paine; it's an electronic pamphleteer.

Our country was founded on the idea that an individual can go and make the world so much better. But there's nothing like that in the twentieth century. No ability to communicate over broadcast, by the

individual. And that's what public access does; it creates true, democratic communication for the first time. But it's only a possibility—despite George [Stoney's] long-term effort—it's still beginning. We have real evidence that it can work, that it can educate, and it can bring a community together. It can let minority voices speak; it can let majority voices speak, and educate. And that's incredibly exciting.

There are dangers. Number One: for cable access to work, it must be truly free. It must be free of all censorship. Censorship by cable companies, censorship by cities. The danger of a censor is that there's no way to stop; there's no way to limit. Each group, a cable company or a city, will have a good reason to censor. You have majoritarian tastes, you have the electorate to appease. Free speech is an expen-

...the remedy to be applied is more speech, not enforced silence.

sive concept—it's hard to explain, it's hard to run on, it's hard to do business with. And you have to be very careful that you set up ground rules that do not permit censorship.

One simple example of the danger is, you can just have a law that says, "OK, everyone can use public access, but no one can use it for racism." Nice sounding, until you recall that, in England, the first group to be limited was a Zionist group, because of a line that racism equalled Zionism. Which means that any term you use, any way you phrase it, can not keep the censor in a box. And that's what's so dangerous, because it's hard to trust anyone to make those censorship decisions.

So we want to keep access free. We don't want the cable companies, of which many, though not all, are not enthusiastic about [access, to censor], and we don't want the local governments [to censor] because we don't trust government either.

We want to be very careful who we give the power to censor. That power must rest with the individual. . .

There are other rules that you can use to keep access democratic. The idea of [required] local sponsorship of programming is one. A limitation on how much any group can use it is another. But public access must be free of the censor to realize its possibilities.

Which leads us to the nightmare. Which leads us to the hate groups, the bigots, those who want to preach the doctrine of hate. There are two questions we want to address, and this is the topic of the day: one is, how do you fight them? How do you oppose them? And the second is, how, under the First Amendment, are you *allowed* to oppose them?

They are two different questions with the same answer: it would be nice, it would be wonderful, if they went away. But they never do. We all know that—the bigots and the hate groups never go away. In one sense, it's hard to fight what you can't see. And I, for one, want a chance to deal with them.

That's where the First Amendment comes in. Let me read you one quote, from Justice [Louis D.] Brandeis in 1927, which is as true today as it was then:

The fitting remedy for evil counsels is good ones. If there be time to expose, through discussion, the falsehoods and fallacies, to overt the evils by the process of education, the remedy to be applied is more speech, not enforced silence.

And that's where public access comes in. Because we can have more speech. For the first time, we have a hundred channels. We can have more speech! Let's have counter-programming; let's meet the hate groups head on. Let's challenge them. If democracy was right, the ideal that people can decide if an idea has any validity, it means that, given a chance, we can beat 'em. We can't make them go away, but I, for one, want the fair fight. . .

Now, there's one way, under the Constitution, you could actually prevent the hate groups from using access, and that's to destroy public access. You can say "No

public access," and then those Nazis won't be able to go on. You can say, "We'll let the cable companies decide," and we can be pretty sure they won't let the Klan on. The trouble with that, is that will wipe out public access. It will wipe out the dream of communication for all the people, for all groups—it will finish it off.

So I can leave you with a thought. The issue for the day is will we let the Nazis and the Klan destroy public access? I hope not. **Brenda Fox**, General Counsel, National Cable Television Association:

I am not one of those who is an ardent believer that necessarily the remedy is always more speech. Maybe that's because I grew up in the sixties in college, and was a part of the free speech movement at [the University of California-] Berkeley. That was more speech, only the largest group of speakers on campus was a socialist group; the second largest group on campus was the neo-Nazi group. And I remember, maybe too well, that in order to go to Hillel services we had to be under a police guard because the open speech was just generating more and more anti-Semitism. I didn't like that, even though I was part of the free speech movement. And I guess that has sort of colored my attitude on some things even today.

But let me get back to this issue. Is cable really supposed to be a soap box? Why? Cable television is a medium of communication. But it is like a newspaper, like a broadcast station—it is the work of an editor. It is the cable operator who is the editor, who has always decided what shall or shall not be on the pages of his newspaper, just the way the publisher of the *New York Times* decides what shall be in each section and on each page of the *New York Times*.

Now, this is not to say that the cable industry has not supported access channels. In fact, when access channels were eliminated by law some years ago, the cable industry came forward and actually was proposing more and more access channels in its franchise proposals than there had been at the time when access channels were required by law.

Well, now we do have a new federal law that requires access channels, the Cable Act of 1984. And, it does meet what some have set out as being a dream of open speech. But I agree it has become a nightmare. And the problem is that it becomes a nightmare for the very people who are the publishers.

Censorship is not a dirty word. Censorship in this country is a dirty word when it is done by government. Censorship done

by individuals is something we all engage in every day of our lives. You censor your children, you censor what you read, you censor if you produce anything, what you put out in your newsletters—I'm a censor right now in what I say and don't say to you sitting here in this room. We all censor every single day. The only reason why censorship has a bad name is because we don't like it when *government* censors.

So, here we have a cable operator, and he goes out to his subscribers and says, "Please buy my television service. There's lots of other avenues that you can turn to for your news and information, entertainment, and television—I'm one of them. And by the way, I have these access channels. Some of you may like what's on them and some of you may not, and the best that I can say to you is that I'm required by law to provide these access channels and I am prohibited by the city government (who requires me to put the access channels on in the first place) from controlling in any way what is contained on those channels."

Now, I can say all that, but when the subscriber gets unhappy about the programming that comes into his home via cable, he doesn't get mad at the city, he gets mad at the cable operator. It's the cable operator's fault that this highly offensive

...we find it reprehensible that we are obliged by law to carry that programming...

programming is coming into his home. And the cable operator can only hold up his hands and say, "I can't help you."

I think cable has been at the forefront of bringing community life and public affairs and news and all sorts of entertainment into the home. And I think it has done a marvelous job and has a long way to go to keep improving on that record. But we do have a problem—and that problem is where this access programming has run amuck. I don't have an answer as to how we resolve this problem. I personally don't feel comfortable in saying that counter-programming is the way out, and I think that many cable operators will be very concerned if that is the only resolution to this problem because, once again, the cable subscriber doesn't understand—no matter how many little notices you provide about how this is not your [the cable operator's] programming, it is still your programming, like it or not.

I'm very concerned about this, and I think my entire industry is very concerned about this, and I think that something has to be done. That something, I think, does reside in the hands of the cities that are requiring that these channels be set aside.

According to the federal law, there is no necessity to have access channels. Access channels can be required only where the city franchising authority requires that they be there. Then the city franchising authority can establish what the rules of the game will be, that the cable operator has to abide by.

I guess my message is, I think it's time that the cities do something about this perhaps very fine idea that has run amuck. I don't think that counter-programming is the answer. I also sincerely believe that unless this gets resolved in a way that is acceptable, not only to the cable operator, but to the cable subscriber, you will find a greater and growing anger about this programming and possibly it will lead the cable operator to test this whole policy of access channels in the courts, and I think that if they are tested, we will find that requiring the set-aside of channels for public access is in fact an abridgement of the cable operator's First Amendment rights, and will likely be thrown out.

That's not something that we want to see happen, and I don't think it's something that all of you want to see happen. But we do have to find some answer short of forcing cable operators to resolve it through legal processes.

(Question: Would you explain what you mean when you say that this has "run amuck?")

What I mean is that many cable operators are very concerned about. . . having to put highly offensive programming on their systems, and they then have no way of responding to that programming other than to say to their irate customers, "The city made me do it." . . . That's my term for the nightmare that Michael [Meyerson] was talking about. I think it's a very strong issue, and we find it reprehensible that we are obliged, by law, to carry that programming. . . . We are prohibited from setting any parameters for what these channels may be used for, and if the cities aren't going to set any parameters, . . . then I agree with Michael that they are being used by hate groups. That is what I mean by running amuck. The hate group use of these channels, fortunately, is not the predominant use of access channels; there is some very fine programming on access. That's why I'm saying that I am hopeful

Continued on Page 10

Public Access...

Continued from Page 9

that some resolution of this problem can be reached so that it doesn't drive us to court to undo something that might have some very positive benefits for society.

William Bradley, Director, Office of Telecommunications, City and County of Denver:

I think we have to realize that where Brenda is coming from is a company *milieu* that wants to make money and doesn't want to upset the customers. I'm here to say that as far as the cities are concerned, the customers are going to be upset now and then because they are going to hear some kind of truth besides what's saleable.

Fox: I don't think that's fair. Cable is something that is invited into the home, the way various printed materials. . . are invited into your home. And unless you subscribe to offensive magazines and newspapers and books, you are able to keep those things out of your home. The problem here is that people are subscribing to cable because of positive things that they want to receive from it, and instead, they are finding something that is offensive. . .

I as an individual don't want that coming into my home, and I feel that I should have the right to keep that out of my home. That's the issue here, is that people are having this thrust upon them, and I think that that's unfair and we feel that it's unfair for us to be the vehicle of that thrusting.

Bradley: Well, Brenda, thank you very much for the opportunity for me to be relieved of the black cloak that Michael Meyerson was trying to put on the cities, by virtue of being potential censors, because now I feel like we are in the position of protecting the people against the censors including the cable company. Thank you.

Fox: I think that's absolutely fair. I am not shy, or afraid, or feel recalcitrant about saying that cable operators are censors. I *hope* he's a censor. I hope that your newspaper publisher is a censor. That's the point. Censorship is not bad in this country; it is only censorship that is done by government that is bad. And we have had a lot of problems of censorship by government in this country, but rarely have we had problems of censorship by individuals.

Rev. Everett Parker, Former Director of Communications, United Church of Christ:

I live in White Plains, New York. . . . We have a mayor in White Plains who does not want any political information to get on the cable system. And so, we do not get anything about how the city runs itself through the governmental channel which is provided for in the franchise.

Just a few months ago, our system was pretty well stolen by [TCI's] John Malone. Literally, we were forced in Westchester County and on Long Island, through the help of the state Cable Commission, to have our various communities accede to the sale of UA-Columbia to Tele-Communications Inc. This was done so that the owners of UA-Columbia could get a tax break before December 31 and actually the deal took place on December 30.

Now, the first thing that TCI did was to knock off several PBS stations and put on these phony sales [e.g., *Home Shopping Network* and *Cable Value Network*] to exploit the people. And my great nightmare is to sit there in White Plains and

**...it's a certain fact
that the access channels
should be totally free...**

think that my First Amendment rights are in the hands of Al Delvecchio and John Malone. And how much use am I going to get out of that cable system, if those guys decide what I'm supposed to hear?

It's true that cable is not like a newspaper, it's not like a broadcasting system, it's not like a book publisher, . . . it's one of the most important monopolies that we have ever brought together. . . . It is a monopoly that has been allowed to do something that no other communication monopoly has been allowed to do, and that is to come into the community, totally to exploit the community for the sale of a product without doing anything at all to serve the general welfare of the community that franchises it. . . . And don't forget that cable brings you no local news, no local events, no local cultural things, except through the access channels and, in

a few cases, where they broadcast the football games for the high school.

This is the important thing to think about when we are dealing with the access channels. The access channels are the way to go, and it's a certain fact that the access channels should be totally free. . .

I don't think that organizations such as our own should be too worried about trying to reply [to hate programming]. For years and years it has been my job to deal with attacks on the church by people who attack the established churches, and I've never found that it was worth while to try to counter the attacker. But it's always a good idea to come on with your own positive representation, and this is one of the good things that the access channels can do. One of the things that has not happened is that important national organizations, and I include my own church in this, have done enough to provide programming so that their local outlets can really use the access channels. I think that's one of the ways we should go.

I have another suggestion. . . . I believe that the Congress, now that it is going to codify the Fairness Doctrine, should also apply the Fairness Doctrine to cable. And the Personal Attack Rule. And that, I would say, could also be applied to the access channels. Because I don't believe that the people who run access channels are very, very different from the people that run the rest of cable, they being human beings. As Paul said, "All sin falls short of the glory of God." I don't see the access operator in my community going out to get people to present an opposite view, especially if the opposite view is not the view of the people that are running the access channel.

So, I would like to see the whole cable system required to do what a broadcaster is required to do. . . . As long as the law would be there, it would give all of us protection for getting on to the channels and having our say.

DISCUSSION OF THE PROBLEM

Irving Levine, Director, National Affairs Department, American Jewish Committee:

[The AJC] is an organization properly characterized as one of the major groups in this country that fights racial, ethnic and religious bigotry, and we've been doing it for eighty years. We can also characterize the AJC as a major First Amendment organization. We've lived with that con-

tradition for a long, long time; but have always felt that an either-or approach is not the proper one, and I seem to hear that over here. I seem to hear that there is no way to limit the impact of racial, ethnic and religious hate short of violating First Amendment or of violating the spirit of access.

Irwin Steinman, President, Staten Island Community Television:

I would like to be a voice from the trenches. I am the President of a Board of fifteen community leaders. All of whom are severely burdened by the problem of their reputation being clouded by what the organization they are sitting with is represented as producing. The fact that we are not producing, the fact that we are just a facilitator, seems to escape them. I agree with Ms. Fox to a certain degree that the cable company in a large measure will get the telephone calls. But I can assure you that it will not take them more than a quarter of a second to reroute those telephone calls to our office.

Personally, I do not agree whatsoever with censorship in any form. But I am not dealing personally in my job; I am dealing as a representative of the community. I am very anxious that access succeed in our community. It's very important. Staten Island is a place that not too many people know very much positive about. We don't have very much of an identity, even within ourselves. And access could be the very vehicle that gives us some sense of ourselves and an identity. But the problem is that if bad things come on our channels, we are going to become a difficulty for the politicians. Because it is very easy for those out of office to say, "You, Mr. Incumbent, you appointed these crazy people. They are letting anything go on these channels! And you are responsible, and Goodbye, you!" It's not going to take the politicians very long to figure out that maybe the population could just as well get their information from the broadcast news services, from the print medium that exists, that's fine and dandy. But why be plagued with this constant problem of people bringing things that are inappropriate for our community?

I feel that we need to have some real answers. We can not go the direction of Mr. Meyerson, it is absolutely impossible; and we can not go in the direction where we can be censors, because if we are censors, we are in violation of our franchise. If we are censors, we are going to be plagued by the cable company saying to us, "You are not doing what you are supposed to do—you are censoring things and we want

your channels back." And the converts there are also going to say, "You're putting all sorts of trash on, and we want your channels back because you're not saying the right thing; you're not representing us."

We need the advice of you experts—not just to tell us broad principles, those wonderful desires and aims. We've got all of that and all the books and the history and all the rest of it. Tell me how I'm supposed to keep community leaders interested in administering this kind of an operation, how to keep the politicians happy, how to keep the principles that we all believe so strongly in alive, and get the job done and make programming interested and guided.

Sidney W. Dean, Jr., New York University:

I want to discuss three things. First, is there a right of access? Secondly, what are the constitutional or legislative origins of the situation we are in? And thirdly, what is a media system?

First, access. The right of access is built into the Cable Communications Act of 1984, but it is built in as *leased* access. It is mandatory that all cable systems with thirty or more channels dedicate a proportion of those channels for leasing on a first-come, first-served, non-

Listen to your attorney, pay close attention to the Federal law...

discriminatory basis to anyone. That is a right and it is built in.

Secondly, what is the legislative origin of the pickle we are in with electronic media? The chief reason that we're in that pickle is the rubric of channel shortage, which is a contrived, invented technological barrier to open access and freedom of speech.

The origin is the Radio Act of 1927, which was the first public radio general medium facility brought into being by the Congress. In the Senate Committee of Jurisdiction it was debated whether a radio transmitter was a common carrier, like a telephone or a telegraph, that people could lease time from and talk to their fellow man. Or was it the equivalent of a local newspaper, in which there was a right of the licensee to control what he carried and what he could reject? By a margin of one vote, the concept that it was

like a local newspaper was adopted.

It took the radio industry, and later the television industry, twenty years to implement it operationally, because practically all early radio and early television broadcasting was supplied by agencies and advertisers. But nevertheless, that was a precedent-making policy decision which was transferred from radio to television practically without debate and which the cable industry is now claiming as their right—the right of the transmission system to control the entirety of its content. The precedent of the postal system, the precedent of the telegraph system, the precedent of the express freight systems, were set aside.

Finally, what is a media system? I suggest that, for policy-making purposes, it has to be examined for what it is, a combination of two completely independent, autonomous industries, enterprises, arts or sciences, which can not be regulated by the same criteria. One is the technical transmission systems and their ancillary amplifiers and switch gear, and the second is content. Content is clearly subject to First Amendment rights and protections. The technical systems of transmission and processing are primarily an anti-trust, anti-competitive situation. If we do not separate our policy analysis into those two independent, autonomous components, I suggest we will never arrive at a public policy.

SOME ANSWERS

[The moderator put Mr. Steinmann's request for practical advice directly to the two panelists presently involved in operation of access centers where "Race and Reason" has been shown.]

Randy VanDalsen, Executive Director, Sacramento Community Cable Foundation:

Listen to your attorney, pay close attention to the federal law, and, in our situation, we pay close attention to our local ordinance. . . . It is strictly forbidden to us in the delivery of the resources that we are providing to the public to discriminate on the basis of a number of things, such as political preference and social philosophy. It's that specific. So, it's very clear to us that we can not touch this. We ensure that they are allowed on the cable system.

One thing that we also have been very much involved in right from the start was a very thorough outreach effort to all members of the community with, in fact, the priority being groups that typically are not able to get access to the communica-

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“Labor Beat”

By Bob Hercules

It's no secret that the voice of labor is continually shut out by the mass media in this country. Due to its corporate owned and advertiser supported system the media, in fact, cannot accommodate labor with a chance to communicate its side of the story, since the interests of corporations are usually in opposition to those of labor.

Given this set of conditions, labor must, of necessity, seek out alternative methods of producing and communicating its messages.

In Chicago in 1984, a coalition of independent producers, labor activists and artists formed the Committee for Labor Access (CLA) to produce and distribute videotapes that address issues from labor's perspective.

Since the fall of 1986, we have been producing our own bi-weekly program, “Labor Beat,” over the Chicago public access channel. The program touches on issues ranging from systematic union-busting by corporations to the labor-oriented issues of *Star Wars* military production. In addition, we have produced a number of tapes that document and analyze the ongoing *Chicago Tribune* strike, and recently completed production of a docu-drama about the famous “Haymarket incident” (the hanging of four labor leaders in 1886) entitled, “The Road to Haymarket.”

The format of the show is always evolving; we have incorporated elements of documentary, narrative and even experimental forms in attempting to forge a union between content and form—unhindered by conventional network television ethos.

We have discovered, however, that the mere process of producing a bi-weekly public access show is not enough. In addition to “Labor Beat,” the CLA has engaged in a whole series of educational forums and promotional campaigns as well.

When we screen our videotapes at public showings, we have found it necessary to explain the corporate broadcast television apparatus and its implications, and why it is important to watch and listen to televi-

sion with a critical mind. We opened our first program, in fact, with an analysis of corporate television and its portrayal of organized labor.

The CLA has also actively encouraged rank and filers to operate video equipment themselves, as this helps to demystify the television medium and changes the relationship they have to television. Given TV's one-way, no-dialogue mode of communication, it is important for working people to understand the process of television and thus its manipulative capabilities.

It should be obvious that the task of publicizing an alternative public access program generally falls on the shoulders of the producers themselves. The cable company (and the popular media) have no stake in promoting a program which is critical of the system they, in fact, are an integral part of.

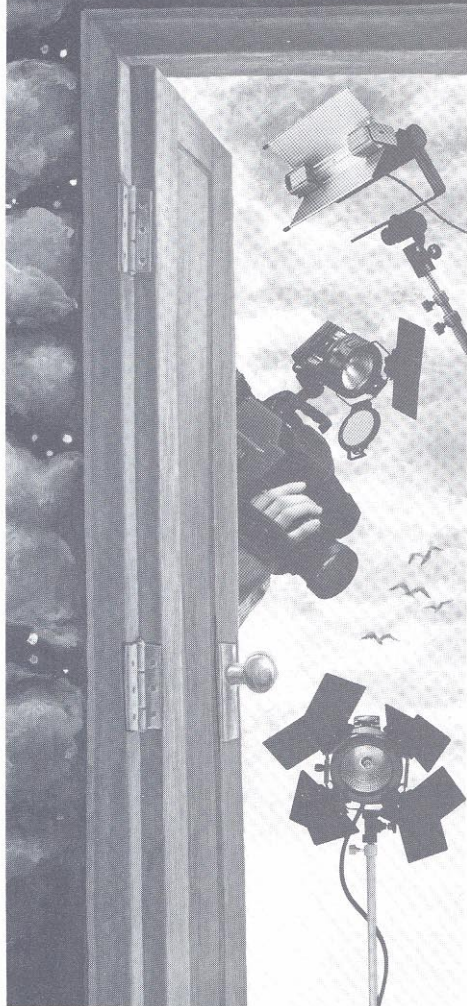
The CLA has taken on a whole range of promotional activities which include publishing a semi-regular newsletter, holding public screenings of our tapes, printing a series of brochures and fliers about “Labor Beat,” and publishing longer articles and analyses of labor issues in newspapers and magazines. We also print up a monthly schedule of our upcoming programs and distribute it around the city.

Chicago itself has provided us with a tremendous amount of material and inspiration. It is a city with a rich labor history, dating all the way back to the origins of the struggle for the eight-hour work day and the subsequent “Haymarket incident.”

But Chicago has always been a city of contradictions, and thus is ripe for commentary. Even now, amidst the great landmarks and grand architecture, stands a city in turmoil with few opportunities available to those struggling to present their case to the public.

The advent of cable television (after Chicago-style political infighting delayed it for ten years) brought with it public access and a real chance for empowerment of the community.

Network and satellite cable channels have the affect of isolating people by presenting a very narrow spectrum of ideas



and opinion. Those not sharing the dominant views are, in essence, shut out of the communications spectrum.

The isolation people feel when watching network TV is reduced by a greater opportunity to interact with those who make the programs. People who watch "Labor Beat" know that we, as producers, are their peers. We encourage our viewers to contact us and, if they desire, to participate in the production of the series. Viewers know that our programs are not market-driven, but rather driven by our need to communicate information and viewpoints not readily accessible to the network-fed community.

The Committee for Labor Access also provides a foundation for larger projects (both in terms of geography and scope) than is possible on public access. Recently, our crew worked with filmmaker Barbara Koppel to produce a 30-minute documentary about a meat packers' strike in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The tape was produced by the union to present its views to the community, which had been subject to a media barrage from the employer, John Morrell Company. The union purchased a prime-time slot on a Sioux Falls commercial television station; airing of the show effectively counteracted the company's propaganda.

As the communications industry narrows into the hands of a few large conglomerates, it is more vital than ever to strengthen public access and expand its influence—this is the essence of democracy. "Labor Beat," and shows like it, are a force for the empowerment of those who have been disenfranchised by the corporate-owned mass media. □

Bob Hercules is an independent film/videomaker and veteran public access producer. Hercules is also a partner in Media Process Group, a video production company based in Chicago, Illinois.



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Stalking the 'Owl'

By Chris David Wagner

Two years ago I didn't know the first thing about making a videotape. But I had a story to tell, and believed that the visual media would be a powerful way to communicate that story.

For the previous three years, I had worked with poor urban elderly residents in downtown San Diego, California (Yes, there are poor people in San Diego). Like many downtown areas throughout the country, San Diego's center city had fallen into a state of neglect and deterioration as people left for the suburbs in the late sixties and seventies. But in recent years, as city living regained popularity, major redevelopment or 'gentrification' of these areas began.

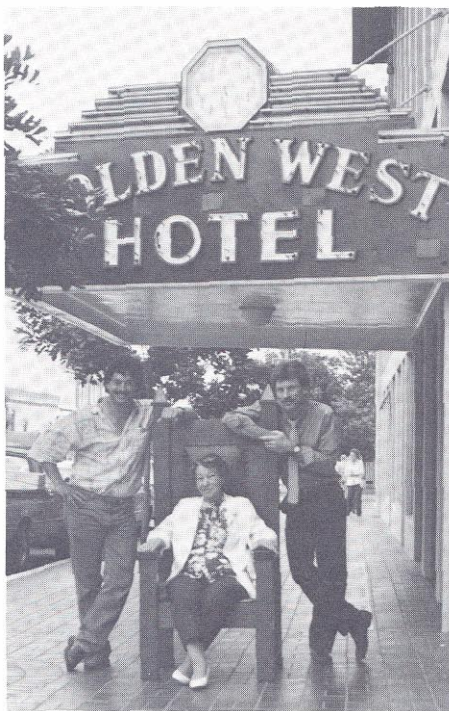
In San Diego, thousands of older persons made their homes downtown in old single-room-occupancy (SRO) hotels. Although poor, they were proud and self-reliant, and able to live independently in the downtown. Many had lived in the hotels for 10 or more years. However, the impact of redevelopment on their lives had been devastating: horrendous rent increases became the norm, hotels were demolished to make way for new buildings, and SRO's were converted into Bed-and-Breakfast inns or upscale living quarters. Many seniors were displaced or able to afford housing for only part of each month; the number of homeless older persons soared. Attempts to get the local media to tell the story met with limited success. I realized that the only way to tell the story was to do it myself.

I was aware that funds were available through the Foundation for Community Service Cable Television in San Francisco for video projects. At that time, the Foundation made grants to community groups in California to work with local cable access centers in producing programs on topics of interest to their community. They awarded \$4,500 to the small non-profit agency I worked for—Senior Community Centers of San Diego.

PRODUCTION

The next step was to find a producer/director who was willing to translate the story into video. The local access center

maintains a list of individuals with varying degrees of experience who are looking for video projects to be involved in. In many cases they will work for very little money, and often, for free. I was very fortunate—after interviewing several individuals, (some with previous video experience,



Producer/Director Doug Bishop, SRO resident Eleanor, and Chris Wagner.

others just learning the trade) I came across Douglas Bishop. Doug had significant background in video, although by his own admission, he had never done an independent production. Doug took the time to read and learn about what was happening to the older residents of the SRO's. This was a crucial factor in producing this program—in a short time, Doug shared my passion for the subject and it would show in the final product.

From here on in, things started to move very fast. Because we had limited funds, we knew we would have to beg, borrow and scrounge most of our resources. We hooked up with three local cable systems (Cox Cable, Southwestern Cable and

Coronado Cable) who provided us with video equipment, editing suites and a great deal of advice and support. And even with the best of planning, the unexpected usually occurred: a short term remodeling of the editing suites turned into a three month project, closing them down. The access staff set up portable editing equipment in their offices, stayed after hours when we ran late, and generally went out of their way to help us on our production.

Our SRO videotape was meant to educate, not make money, and we used that angle for all it was worth. We cajoled a local television station into providing SRO tape footage, convinced the Historical Society to waive fees for loan of old photos of hotels, urged a friend to narrate the video for less than Peace Corps workers earn, and got permission from local hotels and residents to let us tape in their lobbies and rooms.

Doug and I worked on the videotape evenings, weekends and after work over a two year period. We had decided to focus the program on the daily lives of three SRO seniors, and how redevelopment was affecting their lives. It was done documentary style, with limited narration, letting the seniors speak for themselves. We also interviewed the major players in the SRO issue; redevelopment officials, hotel managers, and community and social service representatives. Despite our strong feelings on the issue, we realized the importance of making a balanced presentation. And yet, by allowing the seniors to speak for themselves, the program had a strong emotional undercurrent.

We used volunteers extensively—friends, co-workers, other SRO residents, and student interns. They ran errands, made phone calls, gained us access to city officials, and even bought us lunch. (In one case, they saved my Volkswagen by putting money in the parking meter!)

While I set up and ran the interviews, Doug did all the video work. He was a *wunderkind* with video equipment—the project was blessed by his expertise and

Continued on Page 35

"Orientations" — A Profile of Gay Asian Videomaker Richard Fung

By Carol Greenburg

"There were a number of things that I wanted the film to accomplish. First of all, I wanted Gay Asians to speak for themselves. I wanted to present them as sexual subjects rather than as sexual objects. I wanted to confront controversial topics such as transvestite lifestyles and S & M without glossing over anything. I wanted to point out the variety of opinions and experiences within the Gay Community. . ."

Gay Rights activist and video and film maker Richard Fung has come a long way from the days when he thought that films were "just for entertainment."

"I grew up in Trinidad where, of course, we did get a number of foreign films, but most of them were pretty light weight. So I'd go to these adventure flicks never dreaming that film could be used for a more serious purpose."

It was when Fung moved to Canada in the early 1970's, that he first encountered North American and European art and political films. During those years he was most influenced by Sylvia Spring, one of Canada's first feminist film makers, and by Jackie Levin, who taught a course on women in film. A combination of these influences and his work in community TV convinced him that media could be used as a tool for political organizing.

Canadian laws governing cable required each area to have one channel for community use. Fung was hired by a Public Housing community to teach residents how to make shows about their own neighborhood. The experience taught him a great deal about the responsibility media has towards its audience.

"I wanted to do something on Asian Gays and Lesbians because, at that point, the only material I had seen about the Gay community dealt with whites. Our Asian and Asian American backgrounds have had an impact upon our experience as Gay people, and I thought it was time to direct a documentary that would illustrate that."

Fung teamed up with John Greyson to create "Orientations." The videotape attempted to promote a healthy image of Asians as sexual subjects which would counteract stereotypes of "exotic-Oriental," sexual objects. Fung also wanted to directly address controversial aspects of the Gay experience without sensationalizing them.

"A few years ago one of the Networks did a documentary on Gay life. They shot a scene about cruising in a park with a hand-held camera which left an image in the viewers' minds of an activity that is necessarily dangerous and furtive. When you sway the viewers' reaction to an image with a filming technique it's called 'coding,' and, in this instance, I thought it was disrespectful. I tried to avoid coding in 'Orientations.' I wanted the people and the images to speak for themselves."

Fung is a founding member of Gay Asians of Toronto. Though he made efforts to portray a wide variety of experiences in the video, most of the people who appear in "Orientations" are under thirty, middle class and North American-born.

"I think that people who came of age during the Gay Pride Movement may have a lot less shame and isolation to unravel; they may be better prepared to speak openly about being Gay. I think middle-class people tend to feel their jobs are secure enough to take the risk of speaking out. And I think North American-born people are naturally less inclined than Asian-born people to fear deportation."

It also proved difficult to make the documentary about both sexes. "In a sexist economy where women's jobs are considered 'disposable,' I would imagine many women were rightfully concerned about getting fired if they participated in the project. Also, I think they might have been tense about working with a male videomaker, or perhaps they sensed my fear of misrepresenting them. There's a long history of male appropriation and distortion

of women's experiences. That goes double for Lesbians who have often been exploited by male voyeurism."

"Orientations" has been shown in Toronto, New York, at the Los Angeles International Gay and Lesbian Video Festival and the Fourth Asian American International Video Festival.

"I never expected such a large, varied audience and, frankly, I have mixed feelings about it. I didn't really make "Orientations" with the intention of explaining Gay life to heterosexuals. It was supposed to be a documentation for Gay Asians and Gay people in general, not a legitimization (*sic*) of our choices for Non-Gays."

"Orientations," a 56-minute color videotape is available through Third World Newsreel, 335 W. 38th St., Fifth Floor, New York, NY 10018; (212) 947-9277. It is a New Video release. □

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Project VITAL

By Holly Spence

The lights blaze, conversation ceases, the words ON AIR flash over the studio entrance. "Stand By. . . five seconds to tape!" shouts the floor manager.

A typical studio production? Wrong! This show is unusual because among the guests are persons who are mentally retarded or developmentally disabled. And the distinctiveness of the situation does not end there—the floor manager who has just cued the talent, the person who faded up the video switcher to Camera 2, the audio operator and the lighting crew are also persons with developmental disabilities.

Few people ever envisioned these possibilities before Alan Dachman helped conceive a unique and innovative curriculum called Project VITAL.

Project VITAL—Video Induced Training and Learning—is a one-of-a-kind educational experience. It is also writing a new chapter into the annals of local cable television, a medium known for its extreme diversity of creative insight, production, programming and audience appeal.

The project began in suburban Chicago as a small-scale effort located at "Little City," a residential community for the developmentally disabled, in cooperation with American Cable Systems, the local cable operator. Project VITAL utilizes the medium of television to achieve what Dachman calls "challenging yet attainable aims."

Initial seed money and continuing support for Project VITAL come from the Little City Foundation, and other funding has been received from such donors as the Robert R. McCormick Charitable Trust, the UPS Foundation, Dr. Scholl Foundation, Nalco Foundation, Chicago Tribune Charities and the State of Illinois Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities.

With the help of Karen Littman, a leader in curriculum design for the developmentally disabled, the concept began to take shape in 1980 after Dachman had produced a documentary videotape on Little City. It was during that taping that Dachman realized the power that televi-



sion can have over the people involved in the production. When the machines began to roll, he observed Little City residents modifying their behavior and taking a keener interest in their appearances in hopes of being in the finished show.

The model program for Project VITAL has been what Dachman calls a "creative combining of resources."

"Project VITAL could never have been achieved as a model, nor conceived as a program of national scope, without cable television's public access concept," said Dachman. "There is no doubt that television is stimulating and motivating as well as serving as a unique teaching and learning tool, but Project VITAL would never have happened without the availability

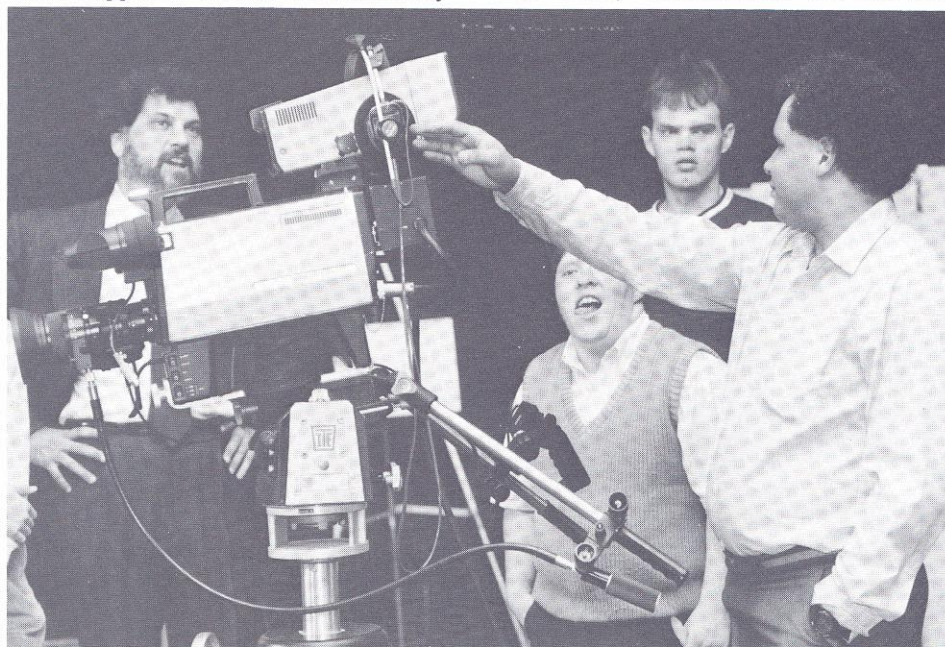
and cost-effectiveness of the resources that public access cable television provides." In fact, Dachman said that the project would never have evolved without the personal commitment of then-public access coordinator Josea Turner, now the local origination producer-director for the cable system.

Those resources include not only the obvious availability of basic training in the use of television production equipment and the exciting programming potential which public access channels provide, but also the combining of a unique curriculum idea with the art of television.

This specially-designed curriculum breaks down difficult technical information into easily-comprehended material. And the best part of this process is that it *works*, noted Dachman.

"Persons who are developmentally disabled typically have been removed from the public eye. Often they perform menial, redundant tasks in sheltered workshops which make no demands on their cognitive or mental abilities."

Traditionally, persons who are developmentally disabled have not had the



Alan Dachman takes Project VITAL students Tom, Harold and Fred through a pre-shoot equipment quiz.

opportunities to work with high technology, but Dachman believes that Project VITAL is proving that they can master these high tech skills. He is convinced that, given the training and opportunities, the developmentally disabled have significant contributions to make in the field of television.

Many of those contributions already are being made in the form of video productions and television shows. Dachman emphasizes that by creating their own shows, the Project VITAL participants also are learning to express themselves—to talk about their hopes, dreams, and accomplishments in life.

"Not only does Project VITAL provide them with a chance to speak as individuals, but what they accomplish is bound to have an effect on how the developmentally disabled are perceived by the non-disabled community. They are not only advocating for themselves indirectly by proving they can make television shows or function within the world of high technology, but they are advocating for themselves directly by being in front of the cameras. The developmentally disabled have had few opportunities to speak for themselves and have been segmented from society and labeled as 'different' even though they intensely want to contribute to society."

During one taping of a show called "Wishes & Ideas," VITAL student Barbara spoke of her wish to Dachman, who served as host. Her wish was to tell people on television about how she feels about being hearing-impaired.

"Through the process of Barbara describing what this impairment has meant to her life, the audience gradually begins to see her, not as a disabled, facially-deformed person, but as a unique and beautiful woman full of vitality and courage who has overcome many obstacles in her life," said Dachman.

In addition to changing lives, Project VITAL can be a unique selling tool for cable television. Although improved reception and such services as movie, sports and music channels are strong selling points, Dachman believes that the community orientation of public access coupled with the potential of Project VITAL can make cable television an even more attractive package. Project VITAL not only expands the capabilities of public access, but it provides yet another voice of diversity in the community.

"Many community producers who were first apprehensive about working with the developmentally disabled have been won over," said public access coor-



Barb, who is developmentally disabled as well as hearing impaired, is the featured guest on "Wishes and Ideas," hosted by Project VITAL director Alan Dachman.

dinator Lorainne Soderlund. "Often the VITAL students are the first ones called to help on a shoot. They are reliable, eager and fun. Not only have they added a new dimension to American Cable Systems, but their programming is some of the most interesting, touching and creative to be aired on public access."

What Project VITAL is providing for developmentally disabled persons is not only how to work within the confines of a television studio as an individual and a member of a team, but also how to deal with a world outside the studio. "It is a social as well as a vocational learning experience for the developmentally disabled," said Dachman. "We are using basic television production techniques to teach work skills and the basic social graces."

The results of Project VITAL have been somewhat startling even in the program's infancy.

"What has happened to these residents of Little City in the program's first eighteen months is unbelievable," said Dachman. "It has been a transformation of total persons—from changes in their physical appearances to a new confidence in themselves and their abilities."

In addition to providing the in-studio production opportunity, Project VITAL has spawned a number of independent video productions; one effort already garnering recognition.

The Center for New Television, a Chicago-based regional media arts facility, awarded Bob Smith a financial grant for his video work. Smith, a resident of Little



Project VITAL participant Barb operates camera 3 in the public access studio of American Cable Systems.

City and a Project VITAL participant, received one of 22 grants from a field of 200 applicants in this fellowship program funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and the American Film Institute. Smith is the only person who is developmentally disabled ever to enter the competition, let alone be a winner.

But Dachman is convinced that these early successes are only the beginning. He envisions Project VITAL as an advocacy tool far beyond the boundaries of subur-

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The Erie Decision: What Does it Mean for Access?

By Joseph Van Eaton, Esq.

This April, the federal district court for the Western District of Pennsylvania handed the cable industry a defeat in what had been the most publicized of the industry challenges to franchise fees and access: *Erie Telecommunications Inc. v. City of Erie*.

At press time, Federal district judge Glenn E. Mercer is in the process of determining the damages the cable company owes to the City for violating the franchise and withholding franchise fee and access payments.

THE ARGUMENTS

Erie Telecommunications, Inc. (ETI), a subsidiary of American Television and Communications (ATC), had argued, among other things, the following:

- Past payments in excess of the old FCC limits on franchise fee payments (including in-kind payments in support of access) were unlawful and should be refunded.
- Franchise fees in excess of the cost of regulation are unconstitutional.
- Payments in support of access do not represent a cost of regulation and are therefore unconstitutional for the same reason franchise fees are unconstitutional.
- Additionally, access itself is an unconstitutional infringement of the First Amendment rights of cable operators.
- Franchise fees and access payments unjustly burden cable operators as compared to other speakers in violation of the Equal Protection clause of the Constitution.

THE RULING

ETI's constitutional challenge to access was in part based on a claim that the city had mismanaged access. ETI argued that Erie was engaged in unconstitutional attempts to regulate the content of access programming, and argued that the city's censorial scheme rendered the entire access plan invalid—a "throw the baby out with the bathwater" approach.

ETI lost on every point, and Judge Mercer issued an opinion which is extremely favorable to access interests. The opinion deals with each of ETI's claims individually:

- The Court ruled that ETI could not challenge the prior excess franchise payments because it had "previously acquiesced to the payment provisions." ETI's claim that it had only acquiesced under duress (in order to obtain the franchise) was rejected, "[since] ETI was in a position to 'blow the whistle'... [t]he Court can only assume ETI chose not to challenge the propriety of the City's demands because ETI was able to outbid its competitors (emphasis added)." The Court found ETI's actions inconsistent with duress and concluded that "by accepting the terms of the franchise agreement and its resultant benefits, ETI maintained the position that the fee arrangement was valid and enforceable." This ruling may be helpful in future cases where the cable operator attempts to escape provisions of a franchise.

- The Court found that communities can charge rent for some uses of public property, and concluded that franchise fees were an appropriate rent for use of public property by cable systems. "[I]t would be unreasonable to require a city to provide public property at a nominal rental fee to a business which intends to utilize this land for the realization of profits... Moreover, as a city holds its streets in trust for the public, it would be a dereliction of a city's fiduciary duty to grant franchise rights, particularly where the grant acts to exclude other members of the public, without receiving the fair market value for the property." Under this interpretation, the "rent" received by the City can be used for any purpose, not just for so-called "cable-related" purposes, like access.

- Having authorized a city to charge rent for use of public rights of way, the Court went on to conclude that the determination "necessarily encompasses the payment of all fees... [t]he distinction between access fees and franchise fees is relevant only for the purpose of determining compliance with the federal franchise fee limitation."

- The Court stated that it was "convinced that access requirements further secure the foundation upon which the First

Amendment is grounded—promotion of a marketplace of ideas... Admittedly, access requirements limit the editorial discretion which cable operators hold over the content of their broadcasts. However, the Court concludes that this infringement is justifiable in light of the regulatory interest held by franchising authorities." The Court found it "of critical importance that ETI maintains control over a substantial majority of its potential cable system."

- ETI's claim that access should be found unconstitutional in Erie because of City mismanagement of the channel was rejected because "[w]hile the Board [of Director's] composition and scope of authority may be subject to attacks by those denied access to the channels, by those regulated in their use of the medium, or by the viewing public," the operation of the channels did not affect ETI's own First Amendment rights. This portion of the decision provides an extremely important base on which access centers can build challenges to unlawful city interference with access programming.

- The Court found that the special features of cable justify regulation, including regulation to enforce access requirements. "Clearly, ETI's use of the public rights of way is dissimilar from that employed by a radio or television station or a newspaper." Hence, dissimilar requirements may be imposed.

The City of Erie has asked the Court to require that ETI pay all franchise fees and access payments owed, plus interest, plus costs and attorney fees. If the City receives attorney fees, it would be a major victory for city and access interests. Some cities are now reluctant to enforce franchise requirements because of the risk that enforcement will lead to expensive court battles. *Erie* remains a case to watch. □

Joseph Van Eaton is an attorney with the firm of Spiegel & McDiarmid in Washington, DC, and a member of the NFLCP Board of Directors.

"From Wyoming to Changhua"

By Linda Jones-Hay

The Wyoming Community Television Center in Wyoming, Michigan is like most access centers across the country; busy with productions, dealing with broken down equipment, helping volunteers with projects and problems, double booking the studio and the editing room, and trying to keep track of all those video tapes! You know, the usual stuff we've all come to know and love/hate about access centers. But in October of 1986 station manager Jim DeWindt and I realized that all that hard work does pay off.

The government of Taiwan, Republic of China, invited us to their country to take part in the celebration of their independence from mainland China, otherwise known as "The Double 10th." The annual event originated in mainland China in 1911. It celebrates the freedom from what was once an imperial-ruled country. October 10, 1911 was the day the revolu-

tion began which broke China's Manchu dynasty.

Now, normally Jim and I are not accustomed to receiving invitations from across the seas. But, thanks to a local restaurant owner and to the city of Wyoming for establishing a sister city exchange, the invitation to Taiwan became a reality rather than wishful thinking.

THE INVITATION

The city of Wyoming has had a sister city in Changhua, Taiwan, Republic of China for four years. Alex Lin, a Taiwan native, owns a restaurant in Wyoming and helped to launch the sister city exchange. Jim and I had been working with Alex in producing programs about the two sister cities when Alex suggested we join a group of Wyoming residents on a trip to Taiwan to see first hand what our sister city was like.

The offer was thoughtful, but unfortu-

nately our pockets were not lined with the kind of money it would take to go.

Alex would not take no for an answer. He called the Coordination Council for North American Affairs in Chicago to see what kind of arrangements could be made. The CCNAA is a part of the Taiwanese consulate in the United States which promotes goodwill toward the Republic of China.

With Alex's continued determination, we received the CCNAA's approval for a generous grant, and we were off to Taiwan as visiting journalists from Wyoming, Michigan, USA.

THE TRIP

Our ten-day stay was exciting and exhausting! We had excellent accommodations. Food, transportation and other amenities were all provided. We even had a government-appointed escort who was with us the whole time we were there.

Our mission was two-fold; to see our sister city, and to see how the Republic of China on Taiwan has progressed in forty years.

We shot two cases of 20-minute video-cassettes. Our schedule was busy from the moment we arrived until we left. We usually shot eight hours a day. Twice we were flown to different parts of the island. One trip was for sightseeing, the second an overnight trip to the city of Kaoshiung. Often our schedule was so tight that we would have to rush through tours and presentations in order to stay within our itinerary. It was quite hectic, but always informative.

An hour-long parade kicked off the Double 10th celebration. Jim and I rode in a bus with several photographers. We were dropped off at a check point where all of our equipment had to be inspected and tagged. We then went to a platform reserved for the media and began shooting. The Double 10th parade consisted of military marching bands and floats. The floats were elaborate creations of lotus flowers, tigers and dragons. The floats were incredibly colorful. Flower petals were used on

Tips For Globetrotters

Customs was no problem entering Taiwan. We did have to open our two equipment cases for customs, but we had a list of all our equipment prepared ahead of time that was sent to Taiwan customs in advance. Returning to the United States was a little trickier because we had not registered our equipment with U.S. customs when we left—had we bought any of it overseas? Fortunately, we had our computerized list of the video equipment, and Jim DeWindt had brought along copies of the sales receipts proving it had all been purchased in the U.S.

Overall, we were pleased with the **equipment** we chose to take along. Besides the 3/4-inch Sony VCR, we also brought along a Panasonic VHS portapak. I think our only regret was a shortage of **videotape**—there's just never enough when you need it. We thought twenty 20-minute tapes plus two VHS cassettes would do it, but it always seemed that there was the great "other shot"—if only we had something to

record it on!

Also, it would have been helpful if we had one more **battery** for our portable light—consequently, we did not use the light whenever we could have.

In planning the trip, ask yourself, "What will I be shooting? Under what kinds of conditions? Will I need an AC adapter for the equipment (we did not need one—the electric current in Taiwan is the same as in the U.S.)?" Try to plan accordingly, lay out all of your equipment and be sure everything works before you pack.

[Editor's Note: be aware that many countries place restrictions, legal, religious or cultural, on where and what you may shoot. Two excellent reference tables with this information are contained in the book, *Travel Photography*. (Life Library of Photography, Time Inc. New York, 1974. pp. 85-87) Although written for still photographers, these tables and, indeed, the entire book contain valuable information for the traveling videographer as well.]



all of the floats, which made for a beautiful parade.

Shooting in our sister city was fun. A parade was being given for Alex and the group from Wyoming, but when we arrived, the parade was already passing us by. Seeing our problem, a Changhua county council woman flagged down a missing moped. The rider stopped, and Jim hopped on with the trusty portapak on his shoulder. Jim was dropped off two blocks ahead of the parade, just in time to set up a tripod and shoot.

In Changhua, we met the mayor county commissioners. We went to a handicapped rehabilitation center for children; saw the largest Buddha in all of Asia, visited our sister high school, went to one of Changhua's oldest temples and stopped at a beautiful new stadium, complete with track and Olympic-size swimming pool.

There was a humorous moment at a reception to meet the Republic of China's premier. Jim was operating the camera while I was checking audio levels on the deck. I looked around to see a local news camera operator shooting us instead of the premier. He later walked up to us and started a conversation. It appears that he

Continued on Page 22



Linda Jones-Hay meeting the Premier of Taiwan, Republic of China, Yukuo-hwa. (Upper right) Linda Jones-Hay, Jim DeWindt, government appointed escort Albert Liu and foreign journalist, standing next to a private car which drove them throughout Taipei and surrounding cities. (Center right) Changhua Delegation. (To the right) Alex Lin receiving a plaque for support of programs and making the trip possible from Wyoming Cable TV Commission board member Ray Peuler.

Wyoming...

Continued from Page 21

was impressed by our video equipment. We had brought our newly-purchased Sony CCD camera and VO-6800 deck with us to Taiwan. He was using a Sony DXC-M3 camera and the older VO-4800 deck, and had never seen the new models. Jim gave the Chinese camera operator a chance to try out our camera. He put it on his shoulder, looked through it and said, "So light!" Jim replied, "No tubes—all chips."

Apparently, Sony exports new equipment to the US first. From that point on, we were an instant hit with other ENG camera operators, all wanting to try our equipment.

THE PROGRAMMING

From the eight hours of videotape that we shot in Taiwan, we completed a 25-minute program entitled, "The Double 10th; Toward a Better Tomorrow." It is a documentary which includes a look at the island as a whole, with its scenery and traditions.

On May 15th, 1987 we premiered "Double 10th" at the Chinatown restaurant in Wyoming, the business owned by Alex Lin who launched our sister city program. A delegation was flown in from Changhua, Taiwan for the affair; and numerous local government officials were in attendance, along with a letter from Michigan Governor James Blanchard welcoming the Changhua visitors.

That same evening, we also premiered our series, "From Wyoming to Changhua." This is a series of programs examining the similarities and differences between the two cities and, in fact, the two countries. The first videotape in the series featured how two newspapers are published, one in nearby Grand Rapids, Michigan and the other in Taipei, Taiwan. Other programs include comparative looks at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum and a museum in Taiwan, the high schools in the two cities, and the two countries' different approaches to the game of baseball.

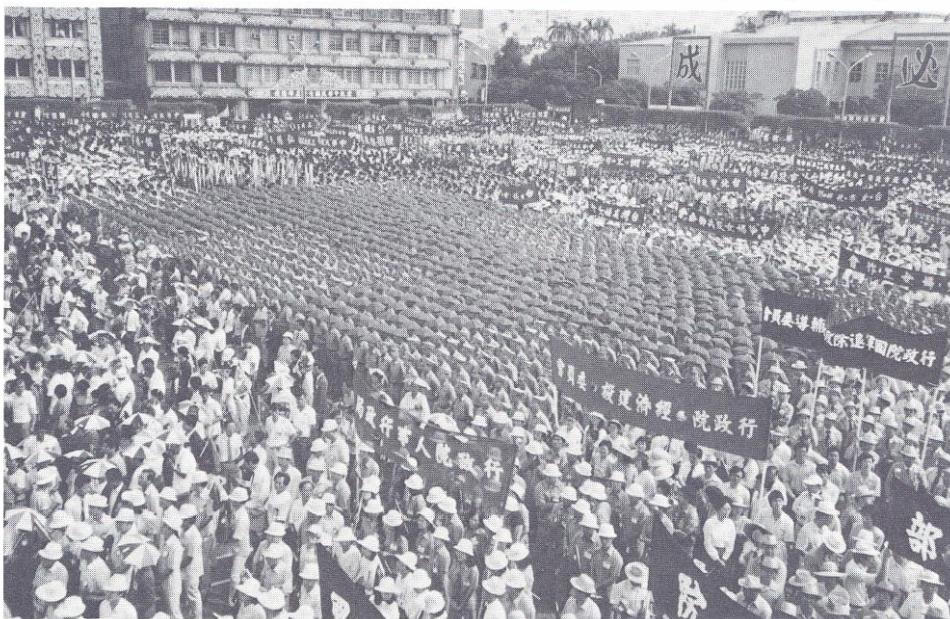
Our trip was truly a unique and rare opportunity and one that we will never forget. It was exciting to be in a faraway land. It was also an honor to know that we were among a group of invited journalists from all over the world—28 countries were represented.

I would encourage anyone who has a sister city program to go and explore the possibilities. If you don't have a sister city program in your town, see what you can

do to establish one. You just never know where it could lead!



Linda Jones-Hay is Public Access Coordinator for the Wyoming Community Television Center, Wyoming, Michigan.



Cheap, Free and Easy

By L. A. Caskey, Dale Hobart, Sharon Octernaud, and Sid Sytsma

If your access center doesn't already own a personal computer, it soon will. This may seem like a rash prediction, but the computer revolution has finally reached access production centers across the country. The lower cost of computer hardware is partially responsible, but the real reason is the increasing awareness of *public domain* and *shareware* software.

There exists a large number of computer users who write programs for their own use and who decide to make their programs available to other users free of charge. Programs made available in this fashion are called *public domain software*. Most authors of these programs insist that the software they have created not be sold for profit.

Shareware, often called *freeware* or *user supported software*, refers to another nontraditional distribution system. These programs have been copyrighted and the authors wish to be paid for their efforts. However, these programmers actively encourage people to make copies of their programs and share them with other users.

Each program usually includes an abbreviated user's manual recorded right on the diskette(s) with the program, along with a request for payment if the user decides to keep and use the program. The price usually is under \$60.00. For the money, the user usually receives a copy of the most recent version of the program (it may have been updated several times since the copied version was written), a complete user's manual, and a telephone number to call for assistance in using the program.

Programs of all kinds are available in both public domain and shareware software. Recently, software for graphics and for computer/video interfacing has received the greatest notice from community programmers. However, more and more access center personnel have expressed a need for inexpensive management-oriented software; programs that would make the day-to-day paperwork easier. They are looking to use the computer in its more traditional roles, such as word processing, spreadsheets, and data

base management. Public domain and shareware programs are available in each of these areas.

One of the most popular of the word processing programs available as shareware is *PC-Write*. The current version of *PC-Write* is a full-featured word processor comparable to programs costing up to \$400.00. This version also includes a fully integrated, RAM-based spelling checker with a 50,000-word vocabulary. The speller can check as you type, or can scan the entire document for errors. Other features include a "Screen Clip" that allows the user to copy text displayed on the screen by other programs into your *PC-Write* text, a customizable mail merge option for printing personalized form letters, and the ability to set temporary margins for typing scripts in the standard video/audio two-column format.

Express-Calc, another shareware program, is an easy-to-use visible spreadsheet with an expansive list of job and report possibilities including preparing payroll and accounting journals, computing depreciation, time and equipment scheduling, accumulating income and expenses, creating forecasts and projections, and a variety of other simple and complex tasks. The data files can be merged with *PC-Write* and *PC-File* (and many other programs) for even more flexibility. As with *PC-Write*, *Express-Calc* functions like a program costing much more.

A data base manager, *PC-File III*, is also available as shareware. This program is specifically designed to be "user friendly." *PC-File III* allows the access manager to create and maintain data bases tailored to the center's specific needs, and includes all the traditional sort and data access features people have come to expect from commercial data base programs. A few of the functions possible are name and address directories, mailing lists with label-printing options, personnel data bases, and equipment use records. *PC-File III* allows the user to import and export files and data bases from other programs as needed. There is also a "secure" code that permits

the maintenance of data on the diskette in an encrypted form.

Excellent documentation on *PC-Write*, *PC-File*, and the communications program *PC-Talk* is available in *The Shareware Book*, priced at \$14.95 in bookstores from Osborne/McGraw-Hill.

There are also many word processing programs, spreadsheets, and data bases available in public domain software. For example, *Freeword* is a simple to use, menu driven word processing program that offers all the standard features (the ability to copy, move and delete blocks of text; the find and replace function, and some formatting options). *Freefile* is a data base program that includes a pre-structured file format for your data. *PC-Money* is a menu driven finance program that allows up to nine accounts to be stored and manipulated. All three of these programs are easy to use, and include documentation right on the diskette.

The main difference, other than the cost, between shareware and public domain software is the complexity of programs. The more structured the program is, the less flexible it becomes; conversely, as options and variety are offered, complexity is increased. Shareware tends to be more complex and offer more options, therefore it is more adaptable to individual needs.

For readers interested in shareware or public domain software, addresses are included at the end of this article. All software discussed here, and much more, is available for IBM compatible personal computers—many programs are available for other computers as well. For more information about available programs, contact the author:

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SHAREWARE PROVIDERS:

(Express-Calc)

Expressware

P.O. Box 230

Redmond, WA 98073

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State Regulation of Franchise Fees: An Alternate View

By Steven H. Schwartz

In the Spring 1987 issue of *Community Television Review*, Tom Karwin's article, "It's Time for States to Regulate Uses of Franchise Fees," argues for state legislation requiring cities to impose five percent of gross revenues as franchise fees. His proposal would require that all these revenues go for access or regulation and that there be minimum standards for franchise enforcement, access channels and other related items.

ANSWERING THE ARGUMENTS

One of the main reasons he cites for a need of state legislation is the inability to influence Congress and the pressing need to resolve constitutional questions. However, there is no way that state legislation can preempt Federal law. Further, if there is to be state legislation, there will likely be

50 different laws, with different standards. This will not solve the constitutional problems. The constitutionality of the Federal law will be judged on its own language—not whether a state law "supplements" it.

What will solve the First Amendment question is winning in court. After Mr. Karwin's article, a Federal District Court held in *Erie Tele-Communications, Inc. v. City of Erie*, that the imposition of franchise fees and public access requirements are constitutional. Although an appeal is likely, this is a major victory for cities and access users. [Editor's Note: see the related article on page 19.]

A similar legal challenge by a cable operator was transferred from Federal Court to a state court in Wisconsin. Federal laws can be challenged only under the

Federal constitution, but a state law could be challenged under either the Federal or state constitutions. Since state constitutions may provide broader restrictions on governmental power, the proposed state legislation has the additional vulnerability of being attacked under a state court constitutional challenge.

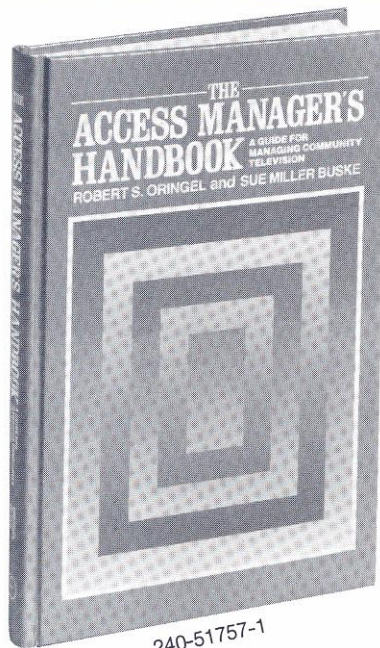
Aside from the constitutional issue, the following policy arguments can be made against state legislation:

1. The Federal law gives cities broad discretion as to how they use revenues from the franchise fee. Specifically earmarking a portion of these funds violates the principle of Home Rule. It eliminates the fundamental policymaking role of local officials of establishing local priori-

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ties and responding to the needs of their constituency.

2. Enforcement of the franchise and allocating franchise fees for access can be accomplished by strong and effective advocacy at the local level. It is unclear how the proposed requirements could be enforceable without either the addition of a state bureaucracy or allowing third party standing, which is discussed below.

3. Even if legal, preventing municipalities from revising their franchises in areas such as the amount of the franchise fee again violates the principle of Home Rule and prevents local officials from making reasonable amendments to their franchise. In addition, the Federal law establishes a formal procedure municipalities must follow to consider modifications requested by the franchisee.

4. Mandating a given number of access channels or other related requirements is unnecessary because this is covered in the Federal law and most modern franchises. In the Federal law, access has the clearest and strongest protection of any aspect of municipal regulation.

5. Granting third party standing to access producers or users would put the cities in an untenable position. Municipalities would get contradictory demands from the operator and access constituency, thus placing the community in a "no win" situation.

If access is mandated to get franchise fee revenues, and if the Supreme Court invalidates access requirements on First Amendment grounds, then that portion of the franchise fee would be lost. Further, the proposed prohibition on certain aspects of municipal franchise negotiations might be unconstitutional under the separation of powers doctrine—once the State delegates jurisdiction to municipalities to grant franchises, it can not tell them how to do it.

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

The better approach for access advocates is to gain political support on the local level. In case anyone's memory fails them, it was the cities, not the cable operators that demanded and negotiated franchise fees, access channels and "freebies" for access. The state legislation approach will undoubtedly create a situation where access users' and municipal interests collide.

The following steps can be taken to generate political support on the local level:

1. Involve key administrative and elected officials. Public access television is

not the type of issue that city officials will be uniformly interested in. Therefore, one or two strong proponents will likely lead the remainder of the City Council. Identify the strong access advocates on the Council and city administration and keep them informed of the issues. Set up a training workshop or open house just for top City officials. Although they may never produce a program, they will become educated in the concept of community programming.

2. Cablecast important Council meetings, candidates' debates and other special events. Although many elected officials will be hesitant to allow cablecasting of their meetings, ask them to try an experiment for a short period of time. Once their constituents see them on television and they realize this is an effective way to get their message across, elected officials will be "sold" on access. Remember, as an access user, you may understand the difference between public and municipal access, but most people don't. A supporter of government access is likely also to support public access.

3. Win the support of the community's "sacred cows." The public access center probably is heavily used by local churches and community groups. It is politically difficult (if not suicidal!) for elected officials to oppose these groups. If access is threatened, advise these organizations of the problem and urge them to speak out.

4. Argue that there is no trade-off for cutting back on access. With rate deregulation in effect, there is little for cities to achieve if they agree to make concessions. Unless the cable operator is about to go out of business, there is little valid reason for cities to agree on one-way concessions. Franchising authorities have a responsibility to insure the greatest number of services, not to insure the cable operator makes a profit.

5. Point out the successes of other access

centers. If the local access center is threatened, or hasn't even gotten started, use successful operations in the areas as examples. Most operating access centers will be happy to give a tour and talk to visiting officials. Visiting successful operations will counteract the argument that "public access is just a boondoggle that no one will use."

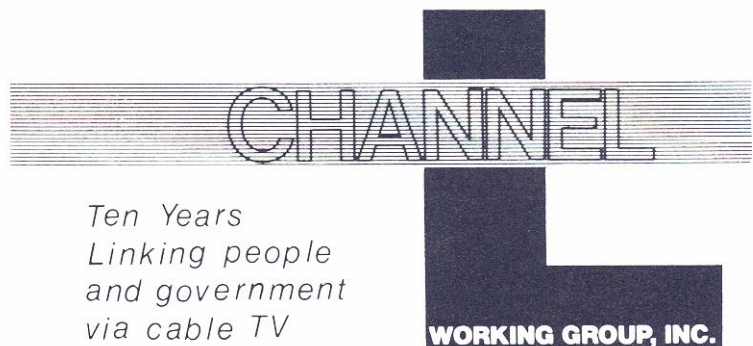
6. If all else fails, pack the house. Anyone who has ever attended a City Council meeting has seen that the group that fills the room with vocal supporters generally gets their way. Fifty to a hundred people at a Council meeting demanding that access not be cut (or that it get started) is a potent political force—particularly if there is no identifiable trade-off in return.

CONCLUSION

In general, access users and cities have little to gain by state regulation and a lot to lose. Access groups that want to preserve their rights should develop grassroots support at the local level, rather than trying to influence state policy. This approach will result in more favorable public policy and will involve an administrative agency that is more responsive to the needs of local access users.



Steven H. Schwartz is Executive Director of the Intergovernmental Cable Communications Authority in Oakland County, Michigan.



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Lost in the Bayous: French Media in Louisiana

By Adam Steg

The French-speaking communities of South Louisiana are the setting for a remarkable example of the potential of cable television to help reinforce local traditions and preserve cultural identity.

According to the 1980 census, there are 400,000 French speakers in Louisiana, located primarily around Lafayette in the parishes included in the southwestern triangle. Having arrived from France via Nova Scotia in the 1750's, the Acadians settled in the swamplands and bayous west of New Orleans, where they retained their language and traditional cultures until disturbed by the arrival of roads, electricity and the oil industry around World War II.

DEVELOPMENT OF FRENCH RADIO

French-language electronic media began in these parishes in the 1940's with the arrival of radio, when it was discovered that the majority of the audiences (and consumers) did not understand programs and commercials in English. Local radio stations decided to create their own folksy programs in the French language, right along with French ads for Whirlpool washers and Ford automobiles.

Of the 22 Louisiana radio stations with French-language programming, these have the most: Lafayette (KRVS)—65 hours per week, Ville Platte (KVPI)—14 hours, Eunice (KEUN)—16 hours, Opelousas (KSLO)—18 hours, and Golden Meadow (KLEB) 14 hours. Programming generally includes news, religion, and music. The music is mostly Cajun or zydeco.

At KLEB, a radio station that covers a wide area from Biloxi to Houma to New Orleans and out into the Gulf, the station serves as a switchboard for people who work offshore on the oil rigs and as a bulletin board to announce various kinds of news. In addition to birth, death and marriage notices, Cajun announcers often "rip, translate and read" wire service reports on the air, while mangling both French and English syntax as they try to explain passage of a bill by the Senate or describe a leak in a nuclear power plant.

These local commercial stations are

profitable, with steady revenues from local advertisers seeking to maintain their image with audiences, who identify with their ads in French.

The non-profit FM station KRVS in Lafayette programs the most French per week, largely due to its alliance with and funding by CODOFIL, the state agency for development of the French language in Louisiana (Louisiana, by the way, is the only officially bilingual state in the US). KRVS is located at the University of Southwest Louisiana, broadcasting at 100,000 watts to 80% of the state's French speakers. It serves as a training ground for young announcers who eventually end up at the commercial French speaking stations. KRVS has a unique personality, combining Cajun culture with National Public Radio programming—It is refreshing to have local and state news in Cajun French followed by the dry tones of "All Things Considered."

CTR readers interested in hearing Cajun radio may consider tuning in WRNO-Worldwide. One of the few independent commercial American short-wave stations, WRNO-Worldwide airs a weekly program in French, produced by KRVS and hosted by Pete Bergeron, called "Voix de la Louisiane." This show describes the history, culture and music of Francophone Louisiana to audiences in France, Canada, and throughout the world. "Voix de la Louisiane" may be heard at 4:00PM (CDT) on Mondays at 11.705 MHz, Tuesdays at 1:30 PM at 15.420 MHz and Saturdays at 6:00PM at 9.852 MHz.

Similarly, a number of French-language radio stations, including Radio-Antilles (Montserrat, West Indies), Radio France International and Radio Canada, have been providing free recorded programs for use by Louisiana stations, often in exchange for Louisiana French programs to air on their stations. This international radio communication has the potential to stimulate more Louisianians to become bilingual radio announcers, while reinforcing their sense of identity as part of a world

French-speaking community.

TELEVISION

French language TV in Louisiana began in the 1950's with French-dubbed versions of American shows like "Bonanza," brought in from Canada and France and aired by the commercial stations in Lafayette, Lake Charles and Houma. By the 1960's, these shows were abandoned in favor of a few early-morning talk shows, as well as weekly Catholic masses and rosaries in French.

Cable television began to take up the slack in the early 1970's when Callais Cable of Bayou Lafourche (an MSO which now serves 20,000 homes in Lafourche and Terrebonne parishes) began to produce local origination programming in French for its subscribers (78% of whom speak French, according to the 1980 census).

Denise Dantin is the single handed writer, producer, cameraperson, ad sales director and on-air talent for the daily program "Bonjour," which airs from 7:00 to 9:00AM. A typical day will have Denise arriving at 5:00AM, translating the wire service reports into Cajun French, preparing oil industry, farm, fishing, and weather reports in French, and going through slides of local businesses for ad insertions.

At 6:55 AM when her director arrives, Denise focuses the camera on her chair, adjusts her microphone, sits down with her scripts and begins the live program. News is followed by taped interviews with local figures and visiting guests, including chiefs of the Houmas Indian tribe, fur trappers who give demonstrations, and visitors from French-speaking countries. Many of these interviews are being archived by Louisiana Public Broadcasting as rare and important documentation of the unique culture in Louisiana.

"Bonjour" is a vital link to the community, evidenced by the fact that the program has a higher rating in Lafourche than any of the network morning shows. Denise has been found in knee-deep water in the station, dressed in a slicker, giving evacuation instructions in French during a hurricane!

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Government Corner: When Government Access is Really Access

By Andy Beecher

Does the term "government access," with respect to cable communications, mean that the local government has access to a channel to *present itself* to the public, or is it an electronic means for citizens to *interact* with their government? Ideally, a government access operation fits both of these definitions.

When the Federal Communications Commission codified this term in its February 1972 "Cable Television Report and Order," it left the determination of what these new channels would actually be to the imaginations of the communities in which they would soon develop. The Report wasted no words: "The government access channel is designed to give maximum latitude for use by local governments. The suggestions for use range across a broad spectrum and it is premature to establish precise requirements." Period.

As we have seen, the government access channels that have proliferated throughout the country during the subsequent fifteen years are as diverse as the communities in which they developed. Most of these operations in the late 1980's are striving to provide their citizens with the means to make better-informed decisions with respect to voting, public health and safety, consumer matters, and a variety of other aspects of community life. This means that, in addition to providing the "window on government" coverage of public meetings, there is a clear interest in extending the types of education that have already evolved within the jurisdictions' departments to a wider audience, via cable television. Such activity describes a government access which has evolved from the early definition ("access by government to a channel") to the more meaningful definition ("citizen access to government through a channel").

Some operations have gone still a step further with the access-to-government concept. They have opened their channels to community dialogue through issues-oriented programs, in which matters being discussed before the City Council, or which are soon to be submitted to the

voters, are further discussed before a television audience. These productions can range from studio talk programs, where proponents and opponents on an issue are given an opportunity to debate their points of view, to a documentary-style exploration of an issue. While there are centers where these latter programs are a way of life (notably, Channel L in New York City), there are other centers that wouldn't touch them with a ten-foot shotgun microphone. Why not?

One reason is clear. If a government access operation is unprepared, for whatever reason, to permit all the sides of an issue (and there may indeed be many) on its program, it should have second thoughts about producing the program at all. Daniel B. Cooper, a Portland, Oregon attorney, wrote in this *CTR* column recently,

... be careful that all points of view are fairly represented and all 'speakers' have had an opportunity to be heard on the issues. Candidate forums must be open to all. As long as your programming in these areas is even-handed and balanced, you should be able to resist claims that there should be a right of 'access' to your facility or channel time. If you do allow someone other than a governmental entity the opportunity to use channel time. . .to promote their own 'messages,' then you need to make sure that any other interested party has the same opportunity for access.

The government access operation is not exempt from the Fairness Doctrine, which can require it to provide equal time for opposing viewpoints when it has cablecast programs on controversial issues. At the time of this writing, a bill is being considered that would codify the Doctrine, long only a policy, into law.

This is not to say that government producers should, by definition, shy away from controversy. It would indeed be unfortunate if the many fine issues programs that have been produced and cablecast on municipal channels were to disappear. What must be recognized, however, is that the government producer must create as fair an environment as possible

for the issues to be discussed by diverse interests in the community.

For example, if we are to produce a program about the siting of a controversial landfill (aren't they all?), we need to do much research into the key players, their viewpoints, and the political history of solid waste management in the area. There may be a group with a line of thinking on the subject to which the local news media has given little or no coverage. If we overlook them, it is far worse than, for example, the newspaper leaving them out of a story. We are the government, and the government must not be in the position of determining which viewpoints are, and are not, available to the community.

When asked what they do when someone from the community requests time to present opposing viewpoints to comments made previously on a city channel, many managers of local government programming operations indicate that their first response would be to refer them to the public access center. In some cases, this might be a viable option.

In other communities, however, using public access resources may require taking an equipment training class, with no other practical option for receiving production assistance, leaving too long a period to make an adequate and timely response to the government program. Or, the public access facilities may be noticeably inferior to the government access studio, or there may not be a public access facility at all! In such situations, it would seem to be imperative that the government access operation be even more community-responsive—by producing programs featuring well-balanced panel discussions and being open to public suggestions on what kinds of such programs to produce.

In another instance, we might be approached by an individual who wants to present a viewpoint on the municipal channel that runs contrary to a decision made at a council or commission meeting. In this case, whether or not the meeting was cablecast on the channel, there would be no mandate that the government pro-

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Diversity of Religious Access Programming

By Rev. Dick Duncan

From the raised voice of a Black Pentecostal preacher in the midst of an excited, singing congregation, raising arms, praising Jesus. . .

to an esoteric teaching about the inherent wisdom of the Urantia book, featuring responses from a high-interest young adult crowd. . .

to a middle-class magazine format show, covering mainline churches providing food for the hungry and shelter for the homeless (complete with on-the-spot ENG footage). . .

to a quiet, "talking heads" discussion promoting the many merits and meanings implicit within the upcoming Passover holiday. . .

to senior citizens "sitting in your own living room" reading the scriptures, with the insights of maturity evident in their own voices (and an obvious absence of commentary). . .

the term "diverse" is clearly synonymous with the wide spectrum of religious programming on cable access channels across America.

Diversity is a mixed blessing for many cablecasters, and public access is no different. The need to have something for everyone is held in tension with the desire for continuity, quality control, and balanced representation. To borrow from Shakespeare, public access facilitators find themselves asking the question, "To diverse or not too diverse?"

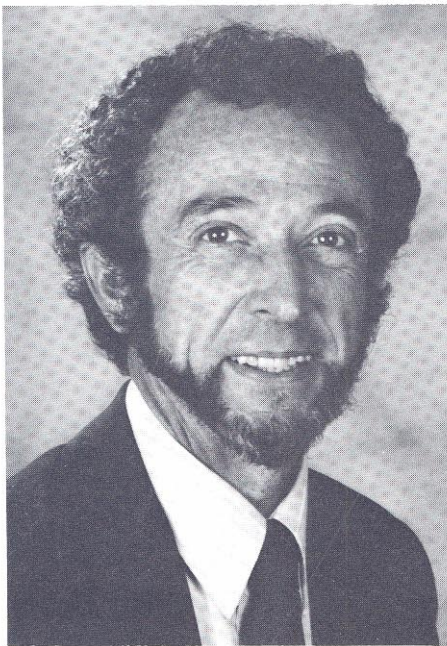
FIRST, SOME DEFINITIONS:

Unless a public access programmer is well-versed in the full expression of the religious community, a tendency emerges to use categories, such as "Catholic, Protestant and Jewish," which excludes all the Eastern religions, the "New Thought" movements, the Theosophical Societies, the Cultural and Tribal expressions, to name a few. Another such category might be "groups who have regular worship services," which often places inappropriate emphasis on using the worship service as the TV program; another is "those whose group size is over 50, 75, 100. . ."

Each of these categorizations eliminates many rich sources of programming. It is

often the smaller groups who realize the importance of telling their story.

A caucus of religious communicators,



Rev. Dick Duncan

cablecasters, producers and programmers met regularly during the 1986 NFLCP Convention in San Francisco. The wide spectrum of religious representation present prompted an attempt to reach common agreement regarding the nature of the term "Religious Programming." The motivations for doing so ranged all the way from identity anxiety, to defining the "in" and "out" members of the community, to communicating more clearly, to curiosity about whether a definition was even possible, to simply seeing what would happen if we tried!

The results? According to our survey, "religious programming" is any program that attempts to do any of the following:

- provide a means for spreading God's word;
- reveal the kingdom of God;
- share the way of the Lord;
- encourage the viewer to focus on a deity or faith system;
- communicate a faith message;
- manifest a Creator;

- present truth as related to God;
 - insure the salvation of people's souls;
- and

- be ethically, morally and theologically uplifting.

In fact, there were as many definitions as there were people present. To include all these key points, in one form or another, creates a mandate for diversity!

FACTORS THAT ENCOURAGE/DISCOURAGE DIVERSITY

(Or, telling the whole story vs. giving a "hint of mint. . .")

The life and expression of any religious community extends far beyond the weekly worship service. Without denying the importance of worship, the character of a faith is spelled out in detail through the daily activities, special events and programs of a religious group.

For several reasons, the televising of a worship service is often the first suggestion which surfaces for a public access program. It appears to already be a pre-produced package by the pastor; it is tempting to fantasize following in the steps of the big-time TV preachers and churches; it is the largest gathering of that community. However, there are several problems associated with the regular cablecasting of the worship service:

- It is not only the first production idea, it is usually the last! Seldom does a TV programming format change from the worship style, once it is in place. Left untried and unshared are the many fellowship activities, fascinating programs, youth events, musical and dramatic presentations, personal stories, educational offerings and service projects which present the plot, sub-plots, cast of characters, focal points and punch lines of the community's story.

- With only worship services visible as "religion" on a public access channel, a general tone of "sameness" becomes all too evident to the viewer. If a variety of formats and styles are used in religious programming, a natural diversity evolves and the variety of programs increases, to

the benefit of all concerned.

- To focus on the worship service exclusively, means that much of the creative TV production talents in a congregation lie untapped. Conversely, a video magazine, a documentary, an educational series, or a musical event, all call forth vibrant possibilities for creative production. Several additional community access producers will likely emerge from the group to bring these topics to the screen.

- The worship service itself is often affected by this new visibility. Decisions about the order of the service, the pace, and the length slowly become based more on how it will look on the tape than how it flows best for the person in the pew. Less and less opportunity is available for spontaneity, layperson participation and variety of worship service styles from week to week.

- Public access channels have a limited amount of available time and equipment, and virtually all have rules against "over-use" of these resources by any one organization. Should there be a high percentage of the religious community wanting to cablecast their worship services, the access channel may have to specify only a portion of its airtime for that purpose, and rotate the interested communities. In addition, it might also be suggested that for every worship service placed on the channel, the particular sponsoring organization should match it with some other format of program telling a different aspect of their story, prior to sharing another worship service.

APPEALS FOR INVOLVEMENT VS. APPEALS FOR \$\$\$

There is little justification for financial appeals in public access programming—in fact, many access channels specifically forbid it. In addition, the presence of requests for financial support on one religious program quickly spreads to others. The result is often a slow skewing of the motivation for production away from education, open expression, "telling one's own story," and inviting participation; to what will bring in the most financial return. The array of religious productions quickly loses a refreshing mix and, from the viewer's perspective, takes on the sameness of pitching for money as the focal point of each religious program.

Note how the production dynamics shift when one of the goals instead is to

motivate the viewer to become personally involved with the idea, activity or organizational efforts. The viewer suddenly realizes self worth for who they are, rather than what they possess. The producer is motivated to tell clearly and accurately "their story," because accountability is just around the corner (when a viewer calls, writes, or shows up!).

LOCAL FLAVOR VS. PRO-TECH

At one time or another, each access channel faces the task of developing an acceptable balance point between locally-produced religious programming and nationally- or regionally-produced "imported" shows. On one hand, local material has inherently higher viewer interest, while imported programs often have higher production budgets resulting in improved technical quality.

A quest for diversity should incorporate both facets in a variety of styles:

- Local programs which roll in occasional imported segments is an exciting blend of the two options.

- In another version, a major issue can be covered locally by showing a ten- to twenty-minute segment produced elsewhere, followed by a local spokesperson, panel, audience or viewer call-in segment.

- The "wraparound" is a less locally-oriented format. The imported program is introduced and concluded by a local on-camera presenter.

- Cablecasting the imported programming complete without any local tags of any kind is the last option.

Because such a wide variety of possibilities exist, one effective technique is to draw together a group of religious community representatives. This group can formulate guidelines to ensure the best of both worlds.

SUMMARY

Diversity encourages more diversity. By nurturing an inclusive atmosphere, focusing competition around the issues of quality and creativity, and involving a wide spectrum of religious organizational representatives as community access producers, a diverse schedule of religious programs can be generated on the access channel. This will create a positive energy which regenerates itself in future programs! □

Reverend Dick Duncan is Religious Media Consultant for the Religious Media Ministry—United Church of Christ in San Diego, California.

Bayou...

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In addition to Callais Cable, Acadiana Open Channel in Lafayette, Cox Cable in New Orleans, and Cablevision in Thibodaux all have from six to twelve hours per week of programs in French. These stations program French as part of community access, and run shows produced in French by Louisiana Public Broadcasting, by independent local producers and access users, as well as free programming provided by government agencies from France and Quebec.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Over the past three years, Louisiana has sent delegations to French-language community programming conferences held in France, Belgium and Quebec, and a regular exchange of tapes has just begun between community channels in these countries and Louisiana. Similarly, the NFLCP has welcomed delegations from Europe and Canada to its national conven-

tions, to discuss common problems and to foster exchanges and communication.

As CTR is going to press, NFLCP Executive Director Sue Buske has just returned from a tour of French cable systems, at the invitation of *Mediaville*, the annual French communications conference. One of the first Americans ever invited to address this conference, Sue described the cable situation in the U.S. and gave practical experience for the new community channels just starting in Europe. Thus, over the years, the Louisiana French channels, far from being "lost in the bayous," have served as a springboard for international exchanges! □

Adam Steg is Director of Media Services for French Cultural Services in New Orleans, Louisiana.

“Communicating Survival:” Public Access/Public Service

By Steve Israelsky

In Arlington, Virginia, where one out of seven residents does not speak English as a native language, Arlington Community Television (ACT) has recently completed a series of videotapes designed to teach recent immigrants and refugees about vital public services. The series, entitled “Communicating Survival,” was produced in six languages; English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Lao, Khmer and Farsi.

Among the program topics are these: how to use the 911 emergency system, how to obtain health care, the new immigration law, using mass transit, finding a job. Over 100 people participated in the research, production and distribution of the programs. Well over \$100,000 was raised to produce and distribute the programming. “Communicating Survival” is a major public service project which has produced extensive benefits for ACT’s public access facility and the community it serves.

DEVELOPING THE IDEA

The project began with the identification of a major need within the community—how to reach thousands of immigrants and refugees with information about services that are of vital importance to their well-being. Past efforts utilizing one-on-one encounters with social service workers, when foreign speaking social workers could be found, simply could not reach everyone who needed information. Written materials were ineffective in serving the large portion of newcomers that were illiterate in their native languages.

After thoroughly researching the problem, the answer was clear: videotape. Tapes could be made that would give the newcomers vital information orally and visually, in their native language. The videotapes could be used by teachers, social service workers, churches, refugee self-help groups and others in either individual or group settings. They could be viewed as often as needed. They could make it possible for vital information to be imparted without the need of a translator or multilingual staff. Finally, the videotapes could be viewed on the public access channel and recorded for later use.



*Residents at Lee Gardens, almost 100% of whom are Spanish speaking, watching **Emergency: Call 911** at Arlington County's Community Center.*

ACT was very surprised to learn that the majority of limited or non-English speakers in the community owned VCR's and used them extensively to view programming in their native languages. This factor was extremely important in the decision to embark upon the project.

The need for the series had been identified by various local government and private agencies that deal with immigrant and refugee problems in Arlington. One of ACT's board members, a resident of the community for over fifty years, suggested working in this area when ACT began discussing undertaking a major public service project. The need for the program series was further confirmed with the publication of a county-sponsored “Survey of Needs for Limited and Non-English Speaking Arlingtonians”. Finally, ACT funded research to determine the most critical informational needs. This research was performed by talking with community leaders, teachers, and conducting class-

room interviews in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

From the beginning, those involved with the “Communicating Survival” series realized that the development of an effective educational series was dependent upon the contributions of a wide variety of community members with different areas of expertise. ACT could provide the skills needed for making the information visual and understandable, but others were needed to provide equally critical knowledge and support.

A Program Advisory Committee composed of those who worked daily with immigrants and refugees was established in order to further refine the content of the selected topics, and to critique each script. Typically, the committee would review each script twice. The committee consisted of ESL teachers in both primary and adult education and social service workers from both government and community organizations. Once this committee approved the

scripts, a final committee composed of representatives from immigrant and refugee communities screened each program to insure that both language and interaction were culturally appropriate.

FUNDING

In order to produce the program series, ACT had to raise well over \$100,000. This was a very difficult step for several reasons: first, ACT was a two year old organization that very few people had heard of; second, virtually no one was interested in funding programs that would primarily be used on a public access channel; and third, funders are notoriously reluctant to give money for the production of film and video projects.

ACT overcame these obstacles in several ways: first, it sought to meet a widely recognized need, one that had been identified already by the local government and by public and private service providers. Moreover, it involved these people in the project so that it in fact became a community project. Second, it persuaded the local chapter of the American Red Cross to be its partner, primarily in name, and to serve as a local distribution point for the videotapes. Third, it completed the pilot program and showed it to potential funders. (ACT found that nothing sells video like video!) Finally, ACT established a Coordinating Committee composed of well-known people from diverse parts of the community, and printed their names on the letterhead used for all correspondence related to the series. An Arlington County Board member, a local developer, the schools' ESL supervisor, a banker, a local foundation program officer and several other prominent Arlingtonians all lent their names, knowledge and effort in support of the project. This form of community involvement was critical in securing the necessary funding.

THE PROGRAMS

There are currently eight programs in the "Communicating Survival" series of videotapes. Each of the programs is approximately fifteen minutes long and focuses on a single topic:

"Emergency: Call 911" teaches the non-English speaking viewer how to use the 911 emergency system.

"Help Wanted" teaches how to locate, apply and interview for a job.

"Personal Checking" teaches that a bank account is a safe and convenient way to pay bills and handle your money.

"The Supermarket" contains many practical examples of how a supermarket can save both time and money.

"Obtaining Health Care" teaches that medical care is available for all that need it,

using maternity care and immunization as practical examples.

"The History of Carmelo, The Undocumented" explains in common terms the basic issues surrounding the recently passed immigration bill. It encourages the viewer to obtain legal assistance and offers suggestions as to how it may be obtained.

"Transportation" instructs the limited English viewer on how to use the Metropolitan Washington subway and bus system.

"Arlington Public Services" teaches the new arrivals about the free and low cost services that are available in Arlington, and how to go about locating them. Education, English classes, housing assistance, medical care and recreational opportunities are some of the featured services.

The response to the initial program, "Emergency: Call 911," was so enthusiastic that ACT decided to produce each future program with a national as well as a local audience in mind. This held true for all programs except "Transportation" and "Arlington Public Services."

PRODUCTION

ACT hired a full time writer/producer/director to work on the "Communicating Survival" project. This person came from an educational and industrial television

**...the majority of limited
or non-English speakers
owned VCR's and used
them extensively...**

background with a great deal of experience producing training programs. ACT also hired a part-time production assistant and a part-time administrative assistant specifically for the project. ACT's executive director served as the executive producer for the series, coordinating various elements of the project including script reviews. A fund raising consultant, who also did some of the public presentation functions such as establishing the advisory committees, also worked part time on the project.

For the most part, the equipment used to produce the series was of the kind that many access facilities possess, such as an industrial quality three-tube camera and 3/4-inch VCR's. When ACT decided to produce generic versions of the tapes for distribution outside Arlington, it improved the quality of the master tape by utilizing an outside production facility and editing

from 3/4-inch to a 1-inch master. Also as a result of that decision, ACT decided to improve the instructional effectiveness of the programs and enhance viewer interest by making limited use of A/B roll and digital effects capabilities that most post-production facilities have. While this added noticeably to the quality of the series, ACT would not have used them in producing the series for purely local use and does not believe that they are essential for a series of this type.

MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION

Built into the "Communicating Survival" grants were the duplication costs for ten copies of each program in each language. This meant that ACT received funding to distribute 540 videotapes to those that could use them most effectively to reach our target population. In choosing which organizations should receive videotapes, ACT was greatly assisted by the mechanisms that had been previously established for fundraising, project research, program research and script approval. Both project research and program research put ACT in contact with content experts whose organizations worked with immigrants and refugees on a daily basis. These same organizations often proved to be excellent distribution points for the series. These same content experts also proved very valuable in providing additional distribution leads.

ACT held two screenings and a press conference for "Communicating Survival." The press conference was particularly effective in garnering publicity; articles were written in *The Washington Post* and *The Washington Times*; two local television stations ran stories on the series; CNN broadcast a story nationally and the USIA Worldnet network ran a story internationally. Finally, ACT compiled lists of all immigrant and refugee service providers in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area based upon lists generated by other organizations such as the Red Cross and United Way. From these lists, several informational mailings were sent explaining the series and how to obtain the programs. In retrospect, what worked best for ACT were the personal contacts established through research, fundraising and production. The community involvement required to produce the programs helped ensure that the programs were effectively used.

Through ACT's marketing efforts, "Communicating Survival" is being used by a variety of organizations and institu-

Community Television in the Deaf Community: A Sacramento Experiment

By Dr. Glenn A. Goldberg, J.D.

"Public access" television means different things to different people, but it has now taken on a very special meaning and significance for almost 100,000 deaf and hard of hearing viewers in Sacramento, California.

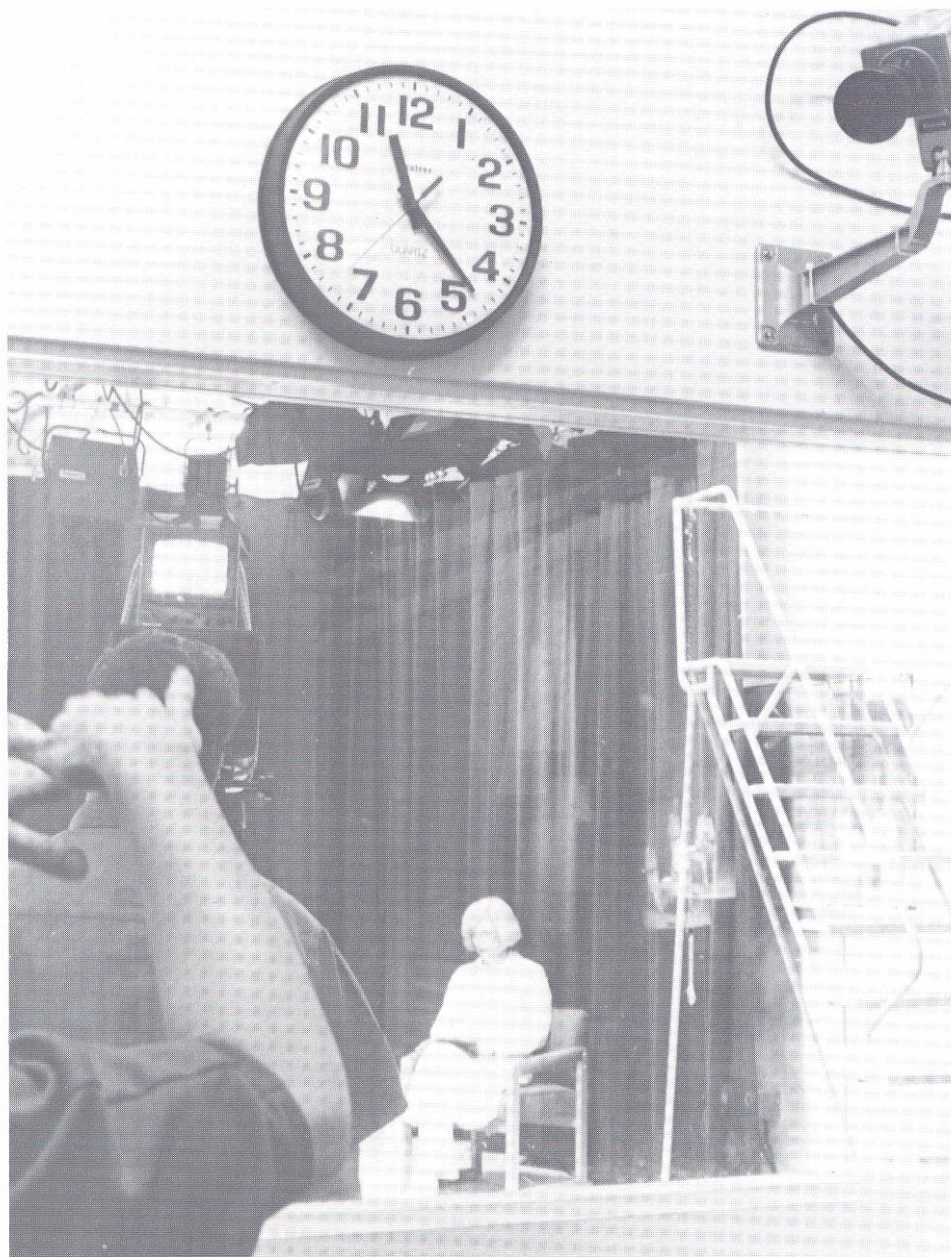
Although a substantial segment of the population (seven to ten percent) is hearing-impaired, this constituency has historically never been considered quite large or lucrative enough to justify the commercial production of special television programming utilizing signing performers—and focusing upon deaf characters, deaf issues and themes; or deaf culture.

Through an innovative collaboration between the NorCal Center on Deafness (COD) and the Sacramento Community Cable Foundation (SCCF), the incredible potential of community access television is now being tapped to serve the special needs and interests of this large, if heretofore ignored, segment of the viewing public. Deaf Sacramentans have been encouraged, trained, and empowered to create their own television shows for broadcast on community access channels, and the remarkable results suggest that in the future, public access television will become an extraordinarily effective and accessible tool for instructing, uniting, and mobilizing the community of deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

TELEVISION AND THE DEAF

Deafness is a communicational disability. Hearing-impaired people do not face physical or mobility barriers, but rather attitudinal and communicational ones. It's as if deaf people spend their lives trapped behind an invisible—but impenetrable—glass wall separating them from the world of hearing people. They can see, but can't understand, the moving lips and dialogue blaring from their television sets. They move their flying hands and fingers in the beautiful handshapes of American Sign Language, but few on the other side of the glass wall understand them.

If everyone understood and used sign language, deaf people would be as "normal" and function as effectively as every-



The Director signs instructions to deaf camera operators at the SCCF studio. Controlroom camera is at your right, and camera-mounted monitor at left.

ody else. *It is their inability to understand spoken speech, and hearing people's inability to understand their visible language, that really disables deaf people.*

One of the most disabling aspects and implications of deafness is that it limits and

impairs the flow and interchange of information and communication with family, friends, employers, and service providers—and renders inaccessible such major cultural institutions and tools as television. Contemporary American life

revolves around the television set—it is our most important single source of information, education, socialization, values and entertainment. Yet for most of the members of the “silent minority,” the world of television, whether commercial, public, cable, or public access, remains incomprehensible.

For deaf persons, television has been characterized as “radio with a few pictures!” (Schein & Hamilton, 1980). The medium has seldom achieved or pursued its potential for visual communication; rather, its emphasis on spoken dialogue has rendered most television programming inaccessible to deaf people, unless the program is supplemented with captioning or manual interpreting.

Unfortunately, both of these supplements have serious limitations. While an increasing number of TV programs are being captioned in English, for example, these subtitles are as hard to read and understand as any “second language” for people whose *native* language is American Sign Language. Moreover, the relatively high cost of the decoders required to unscramble the captions has limited their distribution to approximately 6,000 in California, according to the National Captioning Institute.

The second means of providing deaf people with access to TV programming is the use of a sign language interpreter, but the placement of the interpreter on the screen and the size of the image (usually tiny) vary widely from program to program, and the small “interpreter’s circle” is very difficult to understand.

USING ACCESS

The NorCal Center on Deafness is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization “of, by and for deaf and hard of hearing people,” whose mission is to empower hearing-impaired people to live with independence, productivity, dignity and equality. The COD recently decided to experiment with the use of public access cable television to shatter the “glass wall,” and to provide meaningful television instruction and entertainment to their clients and community.

With seed money provided by the Sacramento Community Cable Foundation, COD initiated the DEAF Cable (Deaf Equal Access For Cable) project that has successfully trained deaf community members to script, record, edit, and produce their own series of six television programs dealing with deafness-related themes, and using signing deaf performers.

The programs deal in culturally-

appropriate ways with such shared issues as crime and fire prevention and safety, employment opportunities for deaf workers, the use of sign language interpreters, assistive devices that promote independence at home and in the workplace, and the services offered by COD. The series will soon be cablecast on SCCF’s two community channels. Eventually, this core group of deaf TV pioneers will recruit and help train scores of their own deaf peers, and continue producing community-responsive programming for deaf Sacramentans.

The television programs they have created will be fully accessible to both deaf and hearing viewers, and will educate and entertain both market segments. That’s why SCCF was so excited to work with the deaf community on this project. Unfor-



tunately, other community access programming continues to serve only hearing people, and will exclude hearing-impaired people. Hearing people can enjoy signs and learn them, but deaf people will never, *ever* learn to hear.

The deaf man who produced the series, Willis J. Mann, is COD’s Community Educator. A graduate of Gallaudet University, the world’s only liberal arts college for deaf students, he was the founding director of the NorCal Center on Deafness, and planned the Seventh World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf. As Community Educator, Mann helps teach hearing community service providers how to better understand and accommodate the special needs of deaf consumers.

Mann recruited a production team of deaf and hard of hearing individuals to enroll in SCCF’s innovative training program, a prerequisite to use of the public access equipment and production facilities. After successfully completing their training and passing SCCF’s certification exams, this team proceeded to make Sacramento history by completing their first series of six shows. (In addition to their own productions, the group reserved a public access channel for one night each

month, to present signed and captioned programming produced by other deaf groups around the country.)

The Sacramento Community Cable Foundation has since been honored with a special commendation from Linda McMahon, the Director of the California Department of Social Services, for its “major commitment of staff, resources, equipment, and broadcast time to the development of television programming accessible to the hearing impaired, by far the most comprehensive effort of its kind in the United States.” With the assistance and encouragement of SCCF’s remarkable staff, the DEAF Cable Project has now successfully achieved its ambitious project outcomes:

- To demonstrate the feasibility of creating fully accessible, relevant, and meaningful television programming for local deaf audiences, by tapping the creativity and talents of members of the local deaf community;

- To establish the viability of community access channels as an important new educational, entertainment, and cultural medium for the deaf community;

- To provide deaf and hard of hearing viewers in the Sacramento Metropolitan Area with instruction that will empower them to live more independently, function more productively, and integrate more effectively into the hearing world around them;

- To provide effective instruction to thousands of hearing people and service providers in Sacramento County that will enable them to better understand, communicate with, relate to, and accommodate deaf people;

- To dramatically increase the availability and diversity of Sacramento-related, locally produced programming for the local audience of hearing-impaired viewers;

- To increase general awareness and understanding of deaf people, and decrease the amount of misinformation, myths, and discrimination; and

- To provide deaf people with a chance to shape and define the way that they and their language and culture are presented and portrayed to the public.

Perhaps the single most important long-term achievement of this local partnership between the deaf community and a dynamic public access organization has been the growing recognition within the deaf community that public access television can provide them with the tool for

Communicating Survival...

Continued from Page 31

tions throughout Arlington. The Refugee Education and Employment Program (REEP) has a complete set of tapes that they use for both classroom instruction and outreach. The Arlington schools use the videotapes in both their ESL and Parent Training programs.

ACT has also placed a complete set of tapes, a monitor and a VCR at the Arlington Schools Intake Center where all incoming immigrants (legal or illegal) and refugees must register their children for classes. While the children are being tested for classroom placement, the parents have up to three hours to spend viewing the tapes and learning survival skills.

The Arlington County Department of Human Services and the Recreation Department each have sets of videotapes. The Recreation Department has established community centers in two very large apartment complexes, one heavily Hispanic, and the other heavily Asian. Each center has a viewing facility where the "Communicating Survival" series is periodically shown.

The Central Entry for Refugees and the Arlington office of the Virginia Extension Service each have a set of tapes. The Arlington Public Library System has three sets of videotapes; two sets in its central library and another in their branch that has the highest number of limited English speaking borrowers. The Arlington office of the Red Cross also has a complete set of tapes that it lends to the community. Many other organizations have copies of specific programs or of many programs in a specific language. As was mentioned earlier, all of the programs, in every language, are regularly cablecast on ACT's access channel.

BENEFITS OBTAINED

"Communicating Survival" was a project that required much more effort, expense and staff time than the specific project funding covered, but the end result more than justified the costs. On the programmatic side, a learning tool now exists that is introducing thousands of recent immigrants and refugees to life in their new country by training them in specific survival skills. On the theoretical side, "Communicating Survival" has proven that a public access facility can play a vital role in the community far beyond that of training future television producers and cablecasting programs—it can assume a

position of leadership by utilizing its production capability to respond to an established need. It has shown that programs need not be cablecast to be effectively used. "Communicating Survival" is proof that an access facility's intimate knowledge of the community puts it in the unique position of being able to provide television programming that speaks directly to a specific, identifiable community need.

On the development side, "Communicating Survival" has tremendously increased the public's awareness of ACT and public access within the Arlington community. The hundreds of individuals and organizations who have either participated in the planning or are currently using the programs all know who ACT is and what public access is all about. Funding organizations, local government officials and many community leaders have all come into contact with public access in a very positive way.

Other, more tangible benefits have already begun to accrue to ACT as a direct result of its involvement in this public service project. Several *ad hoc* groups established as a result of project outreach have been meeting and are planning to produce programming for local cable access. This has led to new Spanish language programming, Vietnamese programming and a multicultural video production club. Also, several organizations have been working with ACT in the development of additional instructional programs that deal with the new immigration law. Finally, ACT has been approached to co-produce a series in Spanish for local broadcast that addresses problems currently experienced in the Hispanic community.

Regardless of the eventual outcome of these and other project related developments, one thing is certain; ACT has helped many people, has accomplished a great deal, and has certainly made many new friends.

Steve Israelsky is the Executive Director of Arlington Community Television and serves on the Board of Directors of the NFLCP.

The "Communicating Survival" grant application and support materials are part of the Grantwriting packet available from the NFLCP. For a case study or preview videotape of the "Communicating Survival" project, write to:

Arlington Community Television
3401 N. Fairfax Drive
Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Software...

Continued from Page 23

(PC-Write)
Quicksoft
219 First North #224
Seattle, WA 98109

(PC-File III)
Buttonware, Inc.
P.O. Box 5786
Bellevue, WA 98006

L.A. Caskey is part of the Department of Telecommunications at Ferris State College in Big Rapids, Michigan. Authors Hobart, Octernaud and Sytsma work in the Office of Academic Computing at Ferris State, a department dedicated to increasing public awareness of nontraditional software distribution methods.

VITAL...

Continued from Page 17

ban Palatine, Illinois where the campus of Little City is located.

The Project VITAL curriculum is being tested at sites in New York, Minnesota and Massachusetts as well as Chicago and will eventually be made available to cable access systems across the country.

Not only will this type of training provide an opportunity for a minority group to develop some specialized and perhaps marketable skills, but Dachman dreams of something greater. This project provides a vehicle to produce and subsequently cablecast productions created by the developmentally disabled. In essence, it will provide this special group of people with an opportunity to see themselves and, perhaps more importantly, for others to understand them, said Dachman.

"My goal is to achieve national use of these materials and methods," he said. "The mere sight of the developmentally disabled functioning in the world of high technology challenges negative stereotypes and creates new opportunities for successful mainstreaming, vocational placement and community acceptance."

Holly Spence handles public relations for Project VITAL.

Owl...

Continued from Page 14

dedication. He did all the pre- and post-production work, sometimes working until late at night editing the day's shooting.

PROMOTION AND DISTRIBUTION

After we finished the program in December 1986, we began to approach the media for coverage. By having a private showing for certain members of the press, we were able to generate several articles in the San Diego print media. Three local cable systems agreed to cablecast it on their access channels, and (wonder of wonders!) the local public television station aired as well.

We submitted "SRO Seniors: San Diego's Threatened Elderly" to the Retirement Research Foundation for their prestigious National Media Awards (the 'Owls'), and we won first prize for non-fiction television, beating out "The MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour" and an NBC program by David Horowitz. The Retirement Research Foundation, operating out of Chicago, Illinois, identifies and promotes programs for and about aging and issues related to aging.

By now, 'SRO Seniors' has taken on a life of its own: several more newspaper articles have been written about it, and it may be used to educate the San Diego City Council about the problems facing downtown's older persons. There is even talk that the local public television station may

Deaf...

Continued from Page 32

which they have been searching for generations—the way they can tell their own story, teach their own lessons, preserve their own language and culture, present their own role models, and empower their own community to function with independence, equality, and pride.

The NorCal Center on Deafness and deaf community leaders expect, within the near future, to produce their own weekly signed "news and sign show;" to develop and cablecast a wide variety of instructional programs teaching independent living skills, job-seeking skills, communication strategies, and coping skills to isolated hearing-impaired viewers previously unreached by service providers; to experiment with the use of public access television as a political organizing and mobilizing tool; and to train exponentially-growing numbers of hearing-impaired people to shatter communicational barriers

with the hearing world through the use of visually-based public access cable television. The television medium may never be quite the same again! ☐

Glenn A. Goldberg, the Executive Director of the NorCal Center on Deafness, is a public interest attorney and advocate for the rights of hearing-impaired and disabled people. He was the founder and first Director of the National Center for Law and the Deaf at Gallaudet College, and is presently a member of the Board of Directors of the Sacramento Community Cable Foundation.

schedule a second air date. Doug and I have plans to get it on national public television.

Not bad for \$4,500, huh? ☐

Chris David Wagner is Manager of Senior Programs for SHARP Healthcare in San Diego, California.

Government...

Continued from Page 27

duce a program supporting this person's opinion, a panel discussion, or any other special production. It could probably be successfully argued that the public proceeding itself provided ample opportunity for the public to be heard through the hearing process.

On the other hand, the government access producer may find a willingness, or even eagerness, on the part of some city elected and appointed officials to discuss the issue with the citizen on a special program, and it would be unfortunate not to pursue this idea. ☐

Government access channels have become vital links in communication between citizens and their local governments. Decisions must be made community-by-community as to the roles these conduits will play in the overall communication environments of our cities, and the extent to which they will be responsive to a diverse range of interests and opinions. ☐

Andy Beecher is programming director of the Metropolitan Area Communications Commission in Beaverton, Oregon. He writes the Government Corner regularly in CTR.



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Alexandria, VA 22311
(703) 845-1705

AJC...

Continued from Page 11

tions media, including any number of minority organizations. Sacramento is a community that prides itself on its multi-ethnicity. A number of different communities involved there have been very active in our activities.

It's interesting to say that, in large part, the response came as a result of [the cablecasting of] "Race and Reason." It was a terrific outreach tool for us, because a number of organizations from minority and the Jewish communities had been contacted by us and not responded. But when they found out that "Race and Reason" was about to appear, suddenly things changed. Suddenly the NAACP had a Cable Programming Committee. The Jewish Federation is doing the same thing. They are going out of their way to find programming that is available from their national headquarters, in addition to flooding our training programs.

This is certainly not what the producers of "Race and Reason" had in mind. They have only taken that one series and presented it; they have not followed up by doing any local programming, but we have seen a tremendous outpouring of support for the way we have handled it. A very strong editorial on our side appeared in the *Sacramento Bee*; I'll quote them:

Ignore the bigots. Silence is itself the most articulate of replies. The cable system is supposed to be accessible to all points of view. Unless material is clearly libelous or obscene, it can not be legally controlled or edited, nor should it be. That doesn't mean anyone has to tune it in. Trying to produce elaborately reasoned replies dignifies this trash with a response it doesn't deserve. Democracy has to trust its own citizenry enough to allow everyone a right to his soapbox, but nobody is required to listen.

So, the thing to do is to try to be in your role, as I was in my role, a very calming influence for the organizations that might be adversely affected. Invite them very clearly to be a participant, and you'll be amazed at what can happen. The company and we received some phone calls at the beginning, but that quickly died out. There has been no response in that area since then.

[Later comments from Van Dalsen:]

... We had no hesitation to providing access for ["Race and Reason"]. I had discussed this issue at length with our Board of Directors well ahead of time. . . [and]

with our attorney, who pointed out that the federal law states the cable company is not allowed to provide any type of censorship on these channels, except for obscene or otherwise unprotected speech. Our attorney's opinion was that since we are acting in lieu of the cable company to provide the management services of this channel, that we had better not [censor] either.

As soon as we found out that this program was going to be cablecast, and since we knew from other communities' experience that it was likely to create some controversy, we again contacted a number of groups that we had already talked with. We wanted to get them involved in local programming, but also to tell them that this program called "Race and Reason" was about to appear, and we told them some of what was going to be in there, and that we wanted them to be aware of this and reconsider their initial hesitancy in becoming involved.

Groups that we contacted included the Sacramento Chapter of the Jewish Federation, NAACP, our Human Rights and Fair Housing Commission, Mexican-American Political Association; a long list of groups. We had focus group meetings with them to describe and show them excerpts of the tape.

When the news media picked up on this, it was fascinating to watch their reaction. Some real misinformation was being developed. Particularly of interest was a local television station. When they got excerpts of the tape and saw that it wasn't "juicy" enough, they went into their archives and brought out Klan cross-burnings, marches, and other things just to make it more exciting.

When we went through this and actually provided to the potentially affected groups what was included [on the program], they started laughing. For instance, when we showed the Jewish Committee the excerpt about the "kosherization" of food and all this, they were on the floor, saying "Are we really getting that upset about these jokers?"

It's interesting that a common thread throughout the programs is free speech. They are very concerned about white Americans having free speech be granted to them. And they are really looking for many groups in our position to say, "No, you can't." So they can say, "There, see?

Just like we said. We're martyrs on the altar of the First Amendment." I think that's really what they are looking for. . .

Some of the organizations [in Sacramento]—I think they were whipped into this by some of the less responsible local media—called for a grand jury investigation. The grand jury did look at it; they had excerpts of the program looked at, they looked at our operating rules and procedures, the federal Cable Act, the local ordinance, testimony from the County Counsel, and they decided after a very brief investigation that we were doing absolutely the right thing; that there was nothing the grand jury was going to do any further, so they dropped it just like that. . .

I just want to make one other comment. I've heard some people talk about the idea of perhaps having government legislate some sort of different approach to this. In fact, such an attempt has been made, in Utah, to outlaw indecent programming, as they were defining it. Not just obscene programming—they were going to the level of indecent programming. That was recently overturned, and the decision was upheld by the Supreme Court. That particular effort to outlaw indecent programming was opposed by the cable industry and certainly the NCTA.

Paula Manley, Executive Director, Austin Community Television:

ACTV is a non-profit, community based organization, that handles public access television in Austin [Texas]. It's been around since 1973. . . We provide community outreach, and we train people in the community in television production. Then, we make equipment available so they can produce their own programs for the cable system. . . A lot of people are participating in Austin; right now, there are approximately 800 organizations involved. . .

Right now, we have three public access channels programmed. There are additional channels that have [government meetings], and there are other channels that are programmed by some of the educational institutions. The three public access channels are available to anyone on a first-come, first-served, non-discriminatory basis; and the vast majority of the programs are locally produced. There are some programs on that are non-local, and we have a rule in Austin, as

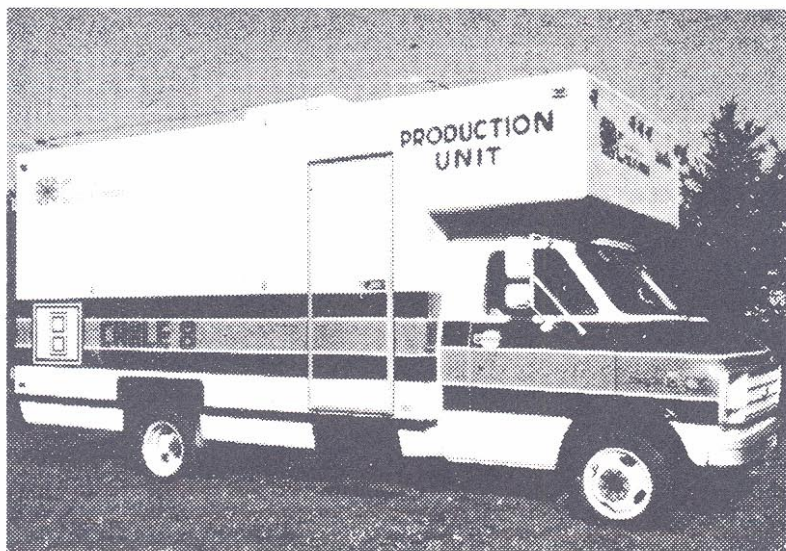
Continued on Page 38

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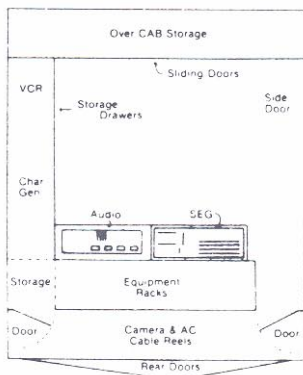


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AJC...

Continued from Page 36

many communities do, that non-local programs must be sponsored by a local person or a local organization.

Which brings me up to "Race and Reason." In 1984, we got a phone call from a local guy who was interested in being the local sponsor for "Race and Reason." We set up a meeting with him and he came in. He was getting the shows on a regular basis and was interested in scheduling them on the cable system. Certainly, we could see some of the controversy that was going to come out of this, and I'll even admit that when he first called things started going through my head like, "Maybe I can create a really hostile environment and the guy will never come back. Maybe. . . the guy would never come back and we wouldn't have to deal with this issue." . . .

He did come over, we did put the programs on the channels, because the channels are a public forum. The show has been on now every week for almost three years. [Initially] there was a lot of response; particularly the black community and the Jewish community voiced a lot of concerns. There were a variety of things that people were saying. Some were advocating just censorship, that "We just don't want it on." Others were saying, "Is there any way we can look at this issue of non-local programming and maybe put some restrictions on [that]."

Ultimately, I think it was a healthy conversation for the community to engage in. . . . Our City Manager went so far as to suggest that content guidelines be formulated to deal with public access programs. Throughout all this time, ACTV took the position that the channels are a public forum, they are available on a first-come, first-served basis to everyone, and that it was in the public interest to keep the channels operated on that basis.

We had several things going in our favor. One was that the City Council in Austin has historically supported the idea of having public access channels as a public forum. We are very fortunate in that, and it's not by chance; ACTV has done some work to educate politicians and make sure they understand that it is to the City's benefit not to get involved in these content questions. . . . That way, the City is protected, and you have more diversity, and you have more going on with your access channels.

Another thing that I think really helped us a lot is that we really did have that equal opportunity model of access. It was more

than just the dream and the possibility that channel space was available for all. There were actually a wide variety of groups participating on the channels. . . . In fact, nearly all of the people who raised concern within the black and Jewish communities were actively involved in public access television in Austin. This was very helpful—they had a forum for their concerns. In fact, they did one show, an anti-Klan speakout, where they used the channel to say the Klan did not have a free speech right to use the channel. . . . They bought into the process enough to be actually using it, even if they weren't totally on the First Amendment bandwagon.

The controversy over "Race and Reason" has died down a lot. It has not been a burning issue lately, . . . but that doesn't mean that, in our community, we really came to a consensus and everyone agreed with ACTV's position that the First Amendment protected everyone's rights and the Klan really did have free speech rights. There are still people in Austin who are participating in public access who don't believe that. But the fact that they have not actively worked against ACTV, and they have not actively worked to replace the open model of access with some other version means that, on some

level, they realize that there are no trustworthy gatekeepers. They know that right now they have access. They know that if some other system is put into place, where someone decides who will have access and who will not have access, that many of these groups may be cut out. The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce will probably always have access; the Brown Berets can't be so sure that some editorial board would not write them off as a radical fringe extremist element in the same vein as the Ku Klux Klan. The fact that they have access now is something that has helped us get through this.

As access administrators and [staff], there are two things that we really need to be doing. One is ongoing First Amendment education. Because this is public access education. Making sure that people know about the First Amendment and making sure that they know the channels are available. The other is to do community outreach and make sure these channels are actively used. . . . [M]ake sure people know the channels are available and may be used in the service of just causes. . . . That we need to use our channels to work against the forces of racism, against the forces of anti-Semitism. □

On Parade...

Continued from Page 6

say "Thank You Chicago!" into the camera. Mueller offers this as an example that broadcasters really don't want to hear what individual vets have to say. The two producers' views on the media are reflected in the styles of their tapes. Mueller's tape is almost exclusively first-person reports; Avante's is presented using skillful narration.

These tapes are both genuine expressions of the feelings that the Vietnam experience has etched on the consciousness of those who fought. They are different, but not truly opposing. The producers might not agree with each other's point of view, but that is not the point. Viewers can appreciate both, because the individual stories each have a mark of truth about them.

This is the kind of diversity not often seen on broadcast television. Too often, TV presents differing opinions as a conflict or a dramatic debate. There's Ted Koppel, sandwiched between two opposing experts on "Nightline." The viewer's job is to make his or her choice—who's right, who's wrong. In the case of these two access tapes, the viewer is just asked to

listen and consider, and grow a little wiser.

The parade programs were aimed at the general Chicago cable audience, and indicate the range of choices that are available on the access channel. This range is broadened even further by the narrowcasting of shows produced for specific audiences. Tom Vazquez, who worked with Avante on his show, is a producer in his own right. Every week, Chicago-area vets can see his program, "Veterans Forum," on Cable Access 19. The program is sponsored by the Chicago chapter of Vietnam Veterans of America, and is already in its second thirteen-week run. It provides veterans with the latest information on such issues as veterans' benefits, research on Agent Orange, or dealing with Delayed Stress Reaction.

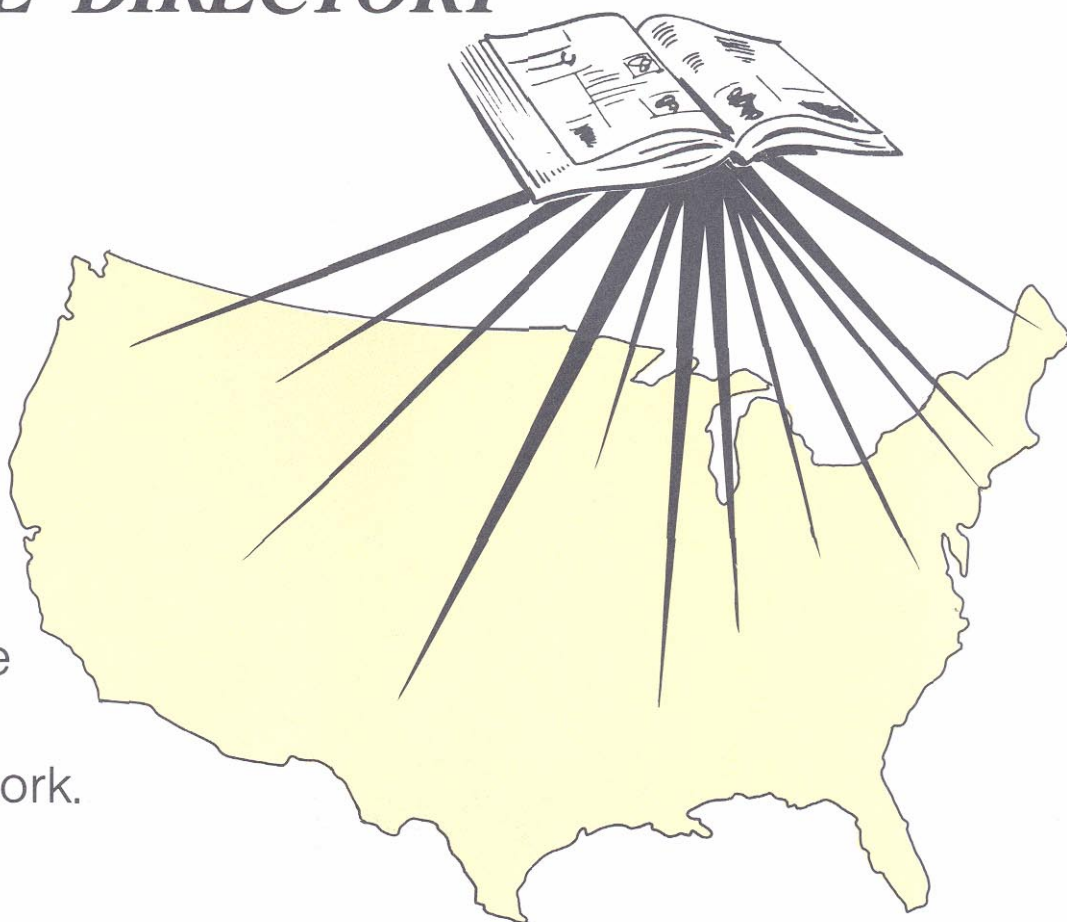
Bravo, Tom—your show represents diversity in depth! We hope other groups follow the example of Chicago veterans and use the access channels, not just for an occasional appearance, but as a representation of the reality and richness of diversity. □

Lilly Ollinger Gleich is Public Relations Director of the Chicago Access Corporation, Chicago, Illinois.

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Five Major Sections

Cable Programming Centers

This section contains **1,100** locations which produce access and local origination programming. This section is designed for easy and quick reference. It contains—

- names, addresses and telephone numbers
- type of management entity
- type of programming (i.e., public access, local origination, etc.)
- annual operating budget
- value of video production equipment
- number and types of channels
- number of staff members
- number of volunteers
- type of training offered
- number of studios
- videotape formats used
- hours per week of programming
- plus Much More .

Analysis of Information About Community Programming Centers

This section provides detailed charts and tables which provide valuable comparisons of information included in the C.P.C. section. Narrative paragraphs explain local cable programming trends.

Free and Low-Cost Programming

This section is divided into two subsections: full-length programs and public service announcements. It provides a comprehensive, descriptive listing of organizations, government agencies, associations and corporations which have free or low-cost programming.

Satellite Services Directory

This section provides a unique and up-to-date look at cable satellite services. It includes—

- name and description of service
- contact person, address and telephone number
- type of service (i.e., Basic, Pay, etc.)
- number of subscribers
- number of programming hours per day
- policy regarding acquisition of independent programming
- percentage of total programming from independent producers

International Programming Sources

This section contains a listing of programming sources by country. It was compiled by Columbus Community Cable Access in Columbus, Ohio.

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____ 100,000 - 500,000 (\$180)

____ Over 500,000 (\$240)

("Government Entities" includes municipalities, states, counties and cable commissions).

____ Patron (\$120)

____ Charter Life (\$608)

ORGANIZATION

____ Library (\$108)

____ For-profit organization (\$180)

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